

This electronic thesis or dissertation has been downloaded from the King's Research Portal at <https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/>



Theatre as a space of resistance in the plays of Concha Méndez, María Teresa León and María Lejárraga

Fereday, Charlotte Bactria Rogers

Awarding institution:
King's College London

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author and no quotation from it or information derived from it may be published without proper acknowledgement.

END USER LICENCE AGREEMENT



Unless another licence is stated on the immediately following page this work is licensed

under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International

licence. <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

You are free to copy, distribute and transmit the work

Under the following conditions:

- Attribution: You must attribute the work in the manner specified by the author (but not in any way that suggests that they endorse you or your use of the work).
- Non Commercial: You may not use this work for commercial purposes.
- No Derivative Works - You may not alter, transform, or build upon this work.

Any of these conditions can be waived if you receive permission from the author. Your fair dealings and other rights are in no way affected by the above.

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact librarypure@kcl.ac.uk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Theatre as a space of resistance in the plays of Concha Méndez, María Teresa
León and María Lejárraga

A thesis submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy

Charlotte Fereday
Department of Spanish, Portuguese & Latin American Studies
School of Arts and Humanities
King's College London
2015

Abstract

This thesis analyses a selection of plays written by the following three Spanish writers: María Teresa León (1903 - 88); María de la O Lejárraga García / María Martínez Sierra (1874 - 1974) and Concha Méndez (1898 - 1986). Close readings are carried out of a selection of plays written in exile, mainly from Argentina and Mexico, following the outbreak of Spain's Civil War.

The methodological approach taken are close readings set within the historiography of these plays within their specific socio-political and artistic contexts. The context of the authors' marginality as female authors writing during Spain's avant-garde at the turn of the twentieth century, the historical and political contexts of Spain's Second Republic and Civil War and the experience of exile are all important in this reading. Also of significance are the intertextual crossovers between the other multiple genres in which these authors have written. Whilst there are intertextual echoes, ultimately these plays convey a distinct and original artistic response to the experience of exile. Their responses to exile are mapped not only in relation to each other and their wider writing, but also in relation to their better known male contemporaries of Spanish Republican exile culture. All of these plays share a characteristic of creating what I term to be "spaces of resistance". This is evidenced in their aesthetic and thematic subversion of conventions and their playful experimentation. Central to the analysis of the plays and their creation of subversive dramatic spaces is gender. All three authors wrote from a self-consciously marginal position, which is evidenced in their use of meta-theatrical devices that break the fourth wall.

The thesis addresses the current critical absence of a discussion of the complex richness of these plays and their potential for performance. An absence that is evidenced by the fact that all of the plays have remained unperformed and existing criticism has been either scarce or non-existent. It

highlights the need to broaden existing research on exiled Spanish playwrights and especially of women playwrights. In doing so it aims to renegotiate how overlooked play texts can be used as important cultural objects, especially in discussing topics of gender and exile in Hispanic studies. Despite having less cultural capital than other genres such as autobiography, poetry and “testimonio” texts, the thesis argues that these are important texts worthy of more critical debate. The continued omission of these plays highlights the ongoing absence of women playwrights from the Spanish canon; an issue that remains to be fully addressed by scholars.

Contents

Acknowledgements	5
List of abbreviations	7
Introduction	9
Chapter One: Concha Méndez	61
Chapter Two: María Teresa León	120
Chapter Three: María Lejárraga/ María Martínez Sierra	187
Conclusion	248
Bibliography	
Works cited	256

Acknowledgements

There are many people and organisations I need to thank for having supported me over the past four years of the thesis. Thank you to my parents, Liz Fereday and Clive Rogers, for always supporting me in whatever I choose to do. An enormous thank you to Professor Catherine Boyle, whose humanity, positivity and faith gave me the encouragement I needed in order to dare embark on a PhD. It is no understatement to say that had I not met Catherine I would not have started a PhD, so thank you Catherine for taking the time with everyone you come across to help them ignite the spark and confidence inside themselves to make the leap. Your office is a safe space in a city that so often seems impossible.

Thank you to the Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC) without the grant I received I would have been unable to complete a PhD. Thank you also to King's College London Department of Spanish, Portuguese & Latin American Studies (SPLAS) for the numerous small grants and support they have offered me throughout the years, which also enabled me to complete the research. A sincere thanks to the kind staff in the reading rooms of the *Centro de Documentación Teatral (CDT)*, *Fundación Juan March* and the *Residencia de Estudiantes* in Madrid; whose help (and patience) were invaluable for this research project. A humbled thank you to a number of researchers who encouraged and assisted me with my research in Spain & further afield: Juan Aguilera Sastre; Juan Antonio Hormigón; Aitana Alberti; James Valender; Julio Checa Puerta; Duncan Wheeler. Thank you to Women in Spanish and Portuguese Studies (WiSPS) for being such an important network through which I found an early safe space for thinking through ideas and meeting many like-minded colleagues.

Especial thank you to my uncle Chris Jennings for being the other trusted reader of the thesis, particularly for his perseverance with my poorly written

early drafts. The many invaluable conversations we had about his own practice as an artist and my research played an important part in helping me to join the dots. An equal thanks to my aunt Gwen Fereday for her constant support over the years and for always being on hand to listen and then also provide me with amazing meals.

The second part of acknowledgements goes to my many colleagues and fellow researchers whose generosity of spirit has been fundamental to fostering my writing and research. Firstly, thank you to my friends and colleagues at King's College London, in particular to: Rachel Scott, Maite Usoz de la Fuente, Rocío Rødtjer and Leticia Blanco. Thank you to my University College London friend, Camilla Sutherland. Thank you to María Bastianes and Andrés Catalán for adopting me in Madrid. Thank you to Marta Pérez Carbonell for being such an important guiding light in the final year, and for her unerring support both emotionally and intellectually. Thank you to David Jiménez Torres for making me feel stronger. Finally, an enormous thank you to my other friends who have consistently listened and supported me throughout the years: Sophie Hughes, Florence Bromfield, Bella Hodgkinson, Cristóbal Zapata Valcárcel. This thesis was possible precisely because of the support of those around me.

Abbreviations

General

El Grupo de Estudios del Exilio Literario = GEXEL

La Asociación de Directores de Escena = ADE

Lyceum Club Femenino = *Lyceum*

Concha Méndez

Memorias habladas, memorias armadas (Altolaguirre 1990) = *Memorias*

Una Mujer Moderna. Concha Méndez en su mundo (1898-1986) (Valender 2001) = *Una Mujer*

El solitario: Misterio en un acto (Amor) (Méndez 1998) = *Amor*

El solitario: Momento de soledad (Soledad) (Méndez 1945) = *Soledad*

Nacimiento. Amor. Soledad = El solitario trilogy

María Teresa León

Memoria de la melancolía (León 1998) = *Memoria*

La historia de mi corazón (León 2008) = *La historia*

La libertad en el tejado (León 2003b) = *La libertad*

La Madre infatigable (León 2003a) = *La madre*

Sueño y verdad de Francisco de Goya (León 2003b) = *Sueño*

María Lejárraga / María Martínez Sierra

Una mujer por caminos de España (Martínez Sierra 1952, 1989) = *Una mujer*

Tragedia de la perra vida y otras diversiones: Teatro exilio 1939-1974 (Martínez Sierra 2009) = *Tragedia* collection

Tragedia de la perra vida (Martínez Sierra 2009) = *Tragedia*

Fiesta en el Olimpo y otras diversiones menos olímpicas (Martínez Sierra 2009) = *Fiesta* / *Fiesta* collection

Sueños en la venta: Cuadro lírico bailable (Martínez Sierra 2009) = *Sueños*

Muerte de la locura. Sueño de la última noche de Carnaval. Motivos líricos para un ballet (Martínez Sierra 2009) = *Muerte*

Introduction

This thesis analyses a selection of plays written in exile by the following three Spanish authors: Concha Méndez (1898-1986); María Teresa León (1903-88); María de la O Lejárraga García /María Martínez Sierra (1874-1974). The majority of these plays were written in Argentina and Mexico between 1940 and the 1970's following Spain's Civil War (1936-9) and during the post-war Franco dictatorship. The past decade has seen an increased number of scholarly publications, particularly those from the frameworks of feminist theatre historiography and exile. These studies have sought to re-establish the significant contribution of all three authors' literary oeuvre.

The close re-readings of the plays have been carried out in relation to the following theoretical frameworks: feminist theatre historiography; exile theory and Spanish; Latin American theatre historiographies. The contribution of this thesis is to build on the important work already carried out by a number of leading critics in the field, and through comparative close readings open up new approaches in critical debates of their plays. Not only have these plays received comparatively little criticism, their works have also been omitted from a wider contextualization relating to broader theoretical frameworks. This thesis provides a different perspective on the authors' plays written in exile in order to map these authors as occupying an important place within Spanish exile studies in Spain. The close readings of the plays are structured as three main chapters: Chapter One: Concha Méndez, Chapter Two: María Teresa León, Chapter Three: María Lejárraga and a conclusion.

Before delving into these chapters, it is important to outline the critics who played a fundamental role in the shift in the critical landscape to recognise the predominant absence of women in Spanish theatre studies. During the 1980s to the 1990s in particular a number of feminist theatre historiographies were published to address the absence of critical studies of the important

contribution of Spanish women playwrights to Spanish theatre. The widespread boom in the publication of women's writing at large from the late 1970s to the 1990s particularly in novels was also reflected in the case of theatre. For instance, Patricia O'Connor's *Dramaturgas españolas de hoy* (1988) was one of the first feminist editions of plays written exclusively by Peninsular Spanish women playwrights. During these years there was also the creation of a number of literary prizes and the establishment of the *Asociación de Dramaturgas Españolas* in 1987. The increased critical engagement with the works of women playwrights corresponds with a more widespread recognition of women's writing at large, in part a consequence of the Post Franco context and rise of Second Wave Feminism in Spain at this time. The playwright Itziar Pascual Ortiz describes this important shift for women writers as being inextricably linked with the changed political landscape:

Las políticas represivas depositan consecuencias concretas en la creación de las mujeres- la *invisibilización*, la ocultación [...] y las acciones de políticas progresistas, de carácter paritario, depositan resultados en la visibilización de nuevas creaciones, propiciando nuevas escrituras y estimulando nuevas autorías. (Ortiz in Zaza 2007, xii)

Thus, women's increasing visibility, socially and politically, was echoed in the more widespread increase in cultural production. Carmen Resino, a Spanish playwright writing during these years, likewise affirmed this to be a boom period for women's theatre:

La etapa de los 80s e inicio de los 90s, hasta ahora la más fructífera, y en la que posiblemente se observe una fijación de estilo [...] Coincide con el interés despertado en España por el teatro escrito por mujeres y una mayor repercusión del mismo, de lo cual, también se benefició mi teatro. (Resino 2007, 502-3)

Resino describes the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s as a period characterised by a new and more visible generation, which coincides with an increasing critical interest in the works of Spanish women playwrights. It is within this context that Virtudes Serrano described playwrights such as Paloma Pedrero as pertaining to “un nutrido grupo de dramaturgas” (1994, 344), who emerged with what Zaza termed a “dinamismo extraordinario” (2007, 124).

The subsequent publication of Juan Antonio Hormigón’s four editions of *Autoras en la historia del teatro español* (1996-7 & 2000) were fundamental to mapping the existence of a vast and previously uncatalogued body of work from Spanish women playwrights from 1500 to 2000. This work was also significant, because many of the researchers involved in these four volumes of *Autoras* have been crucial to building a critical discourse around Spanish women playwrights, a discourse which has included Méndez, León, Lejárraga. The omission of a wider discussion of these plays from Spanish theatre studies (Ruiz Ramón, 1971; Valbuena Prat, 1956; Sáinz de Robles, 1942–1943) further highlights the ongoing absence of women playwrights from the Spanish canon, an issue that remains to be fully addressed by scholars. Juan Antonio Hormigón’s four volumes of *Autoras en la historia del teatro español* (Hormigón, 1996-7 & 2000) was one of the first extensive research projects carried out to address the systematic omission of Spanish women playwrights from Spanish theatre history.

A number of notable Spanish critics who have been instrumental in generating critical debate for the authors studied in this thesis, include María Francisca Vilches de Frutos, Pilar Nieva de la Paz. The bibliography of their contributions to the field are extensive and have been indispensable for the research carried out in this thesis, given that these publications created a critical dialogue around Spanish feminist theatre historiographies and

Republican exile plays. These publications have been crucial to generating critical debate for many plays and Spanish women playwrights whose works had been overlooked both because of their gender and their political beliefs. In particular, this thesis builds on the important work carried out by the following critical texts: *Género y exilio teatral republicano: entre la tradición y la vanguardia* (2014, (coord por.) Francisca Vilches-de Frutos); *Representaciones de género en la industria cultural. Textos, imágenes, públicos y valor económico* (2012, María Francisca Vilches de Frutos, Pilar Nieva de La Paz) and *La escena madrileña entre 1900 y 1936: Apuntes para una historia del teatro representado* (1992, Dru Dougherty, María Francisca Vilches de Frutos); *La presencia de la mujer en el teatro español entre 1918 y 1936* (1992, Pilar Nieva de La Paz). These texts have been seminal in further analysing the important contribution of Spanish avant-garde theatre as well as Republican exile theatre. The works of Pilar Nieva de La Paz and Francisca Vilches-de Frutos have been significant in foregrounding the plays of Spanish female dramatists. This thesis seeks to further build on this important work by providing more in depth analysis focusing on three significant Spanish women playwrights, and the relationship between their plays from the avant-garde with those they wrote in exile following Spain's Civil War.

The other major critical framework that this thesis engages with is the field of exile studies, given that all of these plays were written in exile in Latin America following on from Spain's civil War. This thesis is timely because of its engagement with a variety of different critical fields. It incorporates elements of feminist theatre historiographies, exile and transatlantic theatre studies of plays written by Spanish authors in exile in Latin America. In relation to exile studies in particular it builds on work carried out by the GEXEL study group led by Manuel Aznar Soler. Wheeler has carried out significant work in *Golden Age Drama in Contemporary Spain* (2012) around the visible traces of Golden Age tendencies in contemporary Spanish literature. This is also essential to the close readings of the plays, in which all

three authors are seen to incorporate earlier forms from the Spanish modernist and Golden Age period to the plays they wrote in exile. Other theorists from outside of Hispanic studies who have written prolifically around memory and performance include Roach (1996; 1998) and it is clear that the growing criticism in this area has opened up new potential avenues for research that focuses on exile and theatre.

Méndez, León, Lejárraga share a common historical and political trajectory. Although they lived in exile in different countries in Latin America, this thesis explores the similarities and differences between how the authors engaged with their state of exile by writing plays. Some of the motifs explored in the close readings of the plays can also be found in other exiled Republican plays from their male contemporaries, including the work of their better known literary husbands. The political and artistic developments of Spain's avant-garde are an important shared context for all three authors. The avant-garde is referred to historical period which includes the Modernist period, spanning 1910 to 1940 and which witnessed the development of aesthetic, artistic, literary and philosophical trends which spearheaded a total revolution that would bring arts and humanities into the contemporary age (Gesser, 2015). During this period in Spain there was an emergence of numerous movements such as, to name a few, Surrealism, Ultrism, Fauvism and Cubism, Expressionism, whose impact can be seen across literature, plastic arts, photography and film (Highfill, 2014). Fundamental to these cultural developments were the political backdrops of Spain's Civil War, World Wars I and II and the social changes that took place as a consequence, such as the emancipation of women and an increase in rights. For all three authors there is a shared historical and political narrative at turn of the twentieth century that shaped the plays they went on to write in exile and the Second Republic (1931-9), prior to the outbreak of the Civil War, alongside the authors' subsequent exile, firstly to Europe and then to Buenos Aires (León and Lejárraga) and Mexico D.F. (Méndez). All of these authors lived in Madrid

during the early 1900s, which covers the artistic movements of the avant-garde during the modernist period and the political changes that were witnessed during the Second Republic, during which they had written and had plays staged or read in public. This locates them in a shared geographical, as well as historical and artistic space, and is pivotal to the plays they would later write in exile, which all make reference to this formative period. As argued by critics such as Henry Kamen in *The Disinherited: The Exiles Who Created Spanish Culture* (2008) exile has been fundamental to the development of Spanish cultural production during the twentieth century. Kamen argues that: “One of the most significant, and also most neglected, factors in the formation of modern Spanish culture has been the reality of exile.” (Kamen, 2). In spite of the importance of exile on Spanish culture and the shift in the last two decades to address the lack of criticism, there is still much work that remains to be done in the field.

The references to the plays the authors had written before going into exile are manifested in two key ways: firstly through allusions to their lived experiences as authors; and secondly in the intertextual appropriation of aesthetic tendencies and motifs from the avant-garde. The return to earlier dramatic tendencies prevalent during Spain’s avant-garde 1900s in the plays written in exile shows the importance of these earlier aesthetics. There is also an intertextual crossover in the case of all three authors between the plays they had written in Spain prior to exile. Whilst Méndez, León and Lejárraga embarked on their literary careers in Spain, prior to exile they had all travelled widely throughout Europe, and in the cases of Méndez and León, they had travelled to Buenos Aires. The shared historical context can be mapped onto the major political events shaping the twentieth century, both inside and outside Spain. They witnessed unprecedented violence on a global scale, including World War One (1914-8), Spain’s Civil War (1936-9), World War Two (1939-45) and the Cold War (1945-91). They would also subsequently live through the complex political histories of Latin America, in Mexico and

Argentina, from the 1940s onwards. The plays show idiosyncratic responses of each author to exile which incorporate features that are distinctive and innovative. All three authors' blending of the Golden Age tradition with techniques that were characteristic of Spain's avant-garde is a feature of many avant-garde dramatists which was also replicated in plays written in exile. In *The Cultural Politics of Twentieth-Century Spanish Theatre: Representing the Auto Sacramental*, Kasten describes the work of Azorín and specifically his self-proclaimed auto-sacramental play *Angelita*: "Azorín saw contemporary avant-garde theater as a direct descendent of the Golden age *auto*, both in its theatricality and its popular appeal" (Kasten 2012, 26). This statement can also be applied to the three authors examined in the thesis, and is examined in greater depth in the individual chapters dedicated to each author. An essential part of the chapters focuses therefore on discussing the plays in relation to past aesthetic Spanish tendencies alongside those of their host countries in exile. The cultural space of the transmission of these plays is a complex and unfixed one, incorporating aspects of Spanish culture alongside the host exile culture, and as such these plays are difficult to categorise because they occupy multiple spaces. This plurality of the cultural space of transmission can also be linked too the development of transatlantic studies particularly in relation to exiled Spanish dramatists. This is evidenced in publications such as Magallón's *The Transatlantic Hispanic Baroque* (2014) and Braun's *Theorising the Ibero-American Atlantic* (2013), both of which explore the fruitful critical space of the cultural transmission between Spain and Latin America; a category that clearly applies to all three of the authors examined in the thesis. These points of the complex cultural space of transmission and transatlantic studies are also areas that are explored in the close readings of the plays written by Méndez, León and Lejárraga in exile. By reading these plays as part of a wider theoretical ecology the thesis shows how they have been erased inspite of being significant authors who shed new light on Spanish exile theatre produced in Latin America.

Throughout the thesis I refer to authors as writing in a space of marginality, and this is essential to the argument of my thesis. I argue that the authors can be depicted as having written in a space of marginality because of their gender. Simply put, at the time of writing the plays the cultural production around Spanish Republican exile cultural production remained a male dominated space. The critical evidence of the fact that this was male dominated can be seen in the fact that most of the acclaimed authors of this period were men, and that on the whole the women who were involved have tended to be critically overlooked. The very act of writing the plays is what creates a space of resistance, which throughout the thesis I use as a term that refers to rewriting past and traditional dramatic forms as a way of speaking to a gynocentric response to exile. For all three authors living abroad in Latin America had significant implications for their precarious position as playwrights in exile, as they moved from the already marginal space they occupied in Madrid as female authors writing in the male dominated avant-garde, to the doubly marginal space of exile. The repeated references to these spaces depicts a complex cultural, artistic and social context which they shared as women who lived through the avant-garde years and then subsequently returned to playwrighting in exile. The plays that they wrote in exile subversively and playfully experiment with the limitations of their position, which was living in marginality as women authors.

Chapter One analyses Concha Méndez's notion of "duelo" and how her poetic verse was combined with the *auto-sacramental* to experimental effect in a collection of plays she wrote mainly in Mexico D.F., where she lived from 1944 to 1986, although some parts were written earlier in La Habana, Cuba, where she lived between 1939 and 1943. Both of these terms are fully outlined in the course of that chapter and refer to a melancholic condition of mourning that Méndez incorporates thematically within the play to explore the condition of exile. Chapter Two focuses on María Teresa León and

predominantly on how she continued to incorporate agit-prop and *teatro de urgencia* tendencies from the avant-garde in the plays she wrote decades later in Buenos Aires from 1940 to 1963, although she later moved to Rome (1963-77) and finally to Spain (1977-88). Chapter Three explores a collection of plays written by María Lejárraga and published in Buenos Aires in 1960, where she lived from 1952 to 1974, and focuses on the spectator, the reader and Lejárraga's use of self-referentiality to create a self-conscious dramatic space in her texts.

This thesis builds on the work already carried out by scholars to further drive critical debate around Spanish women exiled playwrights, specifically focusing on: Méndez, León and Lejárraga. The comparative close readings of the plays aim to further establish the case for their value as important cultural products of Spanish exile theatre which deserve to be recovered from the archive. The aim is also to position them in dialogue with a wider framework of their predominantly male contemporaries, but also in dialogue with one another on the topic. The thesis would not have been possible without the extensive archaeological and genealogical work undertaken by feminist and exile literary historians. Manuel Aznar Soler (1993; 2003b) and Gregorio Torres Nebrera (1996; 2003a) have been fundamental critics in furthering critical dialogue on the topic of Spanish Republican exile literature at large. In relation to the authors examined in this thesis they have both made important contributions to furthering critical debates on León and Lejárraga, which will be dealt with in greater length in the chapters devoted to these authors.

Patricia O'Connor is another critic who has been central to fostering critical discourse around Spanish women playwrights and particularly Lejárraga (1972; 1975; 1977; 1978; 1996; 2000; 2003; 2008a; 2008b). Likewise, Pilar Nieva de la Paz (2001; 1999; 2006) and Francisca Vilches de Frutos (1997; 2010; 2014; 2012) have been essential to establishing a critical dialogue around many Spanish women authors and playwrights, including Méndez, León, Lejárraga. Finally, Juan Aguilera Sastre (2001; 2002; 2006; 2008),

Isabel Lizarraga Vizcarra (2009; 2006; 2013) and Valender (1999; 2001a; 2001b; 2001c) have all played crucial roles in strategically furthering academic debate around the texts and plays of Méndez. A more explicit engagement with the important work already carried out by these critics will be carried out over the course of the three core chapters dedicated to each author.

A particularly important research group has been El Grupo de Estudios del Exilio Literario (GEXEL), who have played a fundamental role in the recuperation of these and many exiled authors. In the case of all three authors, republication of their plays has been supported by funding from the Instituto de la Mujer and the Asociación de Directores de Escena de España (*ADE*). The financial support from these pivotal institutions has been important in the resurgence of criticism on the authors as playwrights. The support from the government's Instituto de la Mujer is a result of public funding from the Spanish government during the 1990s and early 2000s which has financially assisted the recovery of women's contribution to Spain's theatre. This reflects the political, social and ideological context of Spain following the end of the Franco regime, a period that saw a huge influx of women entering the work force, and a greater public visibility therefore of women's rights movements and Second Wave Feminism (Montero 1995). As noted by Rosa Montero (1993), these social changes were reflecting the massive numbers of women entering Spain's work force, given that: "between 1970 and 1974, a key period of economic growth, 1.5 million Spanish women who had never worked before entered employment, radically altering the role of women both in and outside the home" (Montero 1995, 382). Important educational reforms were also introduced as a consequence of the 1978 constitution, which gave women equal access to education. Though these reforms took some time to be enforced, as Montero notes, they rapidly led to an enormous change in society (385). The increased critical interest in Méndez, León and Lejárraga, is directly linked to these social changes, given that many republication and

research projects were enabled as a consequence of institutional support following on from 1975.

The political and social context of Spain's Second Republic is one which is fundamental to this study because it is the context from which the writing and life experiences of the authors emerges. Following the inauguration of the Second Republic in the wake of the military vote of no confidence in General Miguel Primo de Rivera, this changed political landscape emerged as a direct consequence of Spain's social, political and economic crisis. The Second Republic was principally voted into power by strikers who felt that a move to socialism was the only viable means of improving Spain's political and social landscape (Preston 1978, 23). One of the most significant changes was the establishment of Spain's first constituent assembly demonstrated in the reforms made by the Constituent Cortes, and the opening of the constituent assembly in 1931. Some of the main reforms in the Republic's constitution included freedom of speech, achieved as a consequence of the relaxation of censorship laws and the freedom of association. Whilst these changes were made in 1931, they were altered over the course of the Second Republic. This is seen from 1933 onwards amidst the backdrop of the miners' uprising (1934-5) and the start of the Civil War from July 17th 1936, until the Republic's official demise in March 1939. The Second Republic is an important period for contemporary Spanish history, as a concentrated period of great political and social change over a comparatively short period of time. The developments in Spain's theatre during the Second Republic were directly related to this changing social and political context:

Las profundas transformaciones sociales y políticas que tienen lugar en España durante el periodo de la II República y la guerra civil necesariamente habían de incidir en el campo del espectáculo teatral. Asistimos durante estos años a una serie de intentos de transformar las estructuras del espectáculo teatral, de

llevar a los teatros de un nuevo público—o, más precisamente, en un primer momento, de llevar el teatro a un nuevo público—, de creación de un repertorio adecuado a las circunstancias y a los intereses de ese nuevo público. Sin embargo, no ha sido realizado todavía un análisis en profundidad de los distintos intentos de transformación que se llevan a cabo en el período. Limitaciones de distinto orden surgen inmediatamente a la superficie. (Bilbatúa 1976, 9-10)

During the early avant-garde and Second Republic years, there was a drive from outside the commercial theatres to redefine Spain's theatre. One characteristic of this was the return to the conventions of Spanish Golden Age theatre, as described by Ruiz Ramón: "Pronto una nueva influencia se hará sentir, desplazando al modernismo: la influencia del drama romántico, despojado de su énfasis formal y de su carga patética y, a través de éste, la del drama nacional del Siglo de Oro" (Ruiz Ramón 1971, 64). This return to Golden Age theatre was related to the mass popularity of authors such as Lope de Vega, Calderón and Quevedo, who had attracted an audience from a mixed social strata in their lifetime. Whilst the majority of the commercial plays staged during the avant-garde "appealed the lowest tastes of the bourgeois audience with post-Romantic melodramas" (Sánchez 1998, 20-1) there was also often an educational and pedagogical agenda, as most famously carried out by La Barraca:

La Barraca should be seen as a part of a wider cultural and educational strategy set in motion by the new Republican government to combat Spain's backwardness and social inequalities. This strategy would involve, among other things, the renewal of the educational inspectorate and the development of new programmes at Madrid University, and was heralded already in May 1931 with the establishment of the so-called

‘Misiones Pedagógicas’ [Pedagogical Missions] under the presidency of Antonio Machado, a writer admired by Lorca. Imbued with the spirit of the Institución Libre de Enseñanza and inspired by the educational idealism of Manuel Bartolomé de Cossío, these ‘missions’ were designed to enrich the lives of those sectors of the population that, by virtue of their isolation or poverty, were deprived of direct contact with any form of cultural expression beyond their own traditional practices. (Dennis 2007, 183-4)

This was particularly the case for the theatre companies that travelled to rural populations, aided by organisations such as the Institución Libre de Enseñanza, which helped to develop progressive values and the diversity of cultural outreach projects. Various state-funded initiatives for the arts were begun during the Second Republic and as a direct consequence of travelling theatre companies, such as the Misiones Pedagógicas led by Alejandro Casona and Rafael Alberti. A significant aspect of the Misiones Pedagógicas, as far as this thesis is concerned, and specifically Federico García Lorca’s *La Barraca*, was the performance of new avant-garde theatre alongside restaged classic Golden Age texts during the Second Republic where the inclusion of Lope, Calderón and Cervantes were “designed to pay homage to the popular folklore and traditional culture that Lorca knew so well from his own background” (Dennis 2007, 184). This amalgamation of the avant-garde and classical elements of the theatre is also evident in the plays written in exile by Méndez, León and Lejárraga. All three authors incorporate elements of allegory, most frequently from the auto-sacramental. Whilst this analysis refers to allegory throughout the reading, I acknowledge the complexity of the term and ground reference to it here in the *Diccionario del teatro iberoamericano*:

La alegoría se constituye como técnica fundamental del auto porque permite plasmar los conceptos espirituales en el

escenario y porque es un recurso especialmente apto para el adoctrinamiento. Hay dos clases de alegorías en los autos sacramentales. Por un lado, la utilización de personajes alegóricos que permiten encarnar en escena vicios y virtudes, en un rasgo acusado del género; por otro, los sistemas trabados de metáforas permite entender todo tipo de elementos, por ejemplo los mitológicos, como expresión de la aventura de la salvación. (Fuente Ballesteros & Amezúa 2002, 35)

Many of the plays by Méndez, León and Lejárraga are characterised by including allegorical characters and metaphor to reveal a narrative that operates on both a literal and symbolic level. The extensive use of allegory in the texts shows not only an inclusion of an older Spanish theatrical genre, but also a repeated turn to symbolism and metaphor in order to express a tendency towards ontological and existential thematic preoccupations.

The context of a more liberal education and increased state funding for the arts during the Second Republic was essential to the development of the theatre. Whilst I refer to the avant-garde as a historical period that includes the Second Republic, I acknowledge the complexity of this term which has multiple and on some occasions conflicting definitions. Similarly, the theatrical tendencies of Spain's avant-garde are also multifarious. Sánchez (1998) outlines some of the key developments of theatre that sought to create a different aesthetic to those established during the nineteenth century:

During the years of the Republic only a few writers such as Ramón J. Sender and Max Aub defended, to a degree, the idea of realist theatre from a political perspective. But in general terms, the Spanish theatre of the avant-garde was much closer to this idea of 'retheatricalization', which should be associated

with the models that arose from symbolism: Appia, Craig, Copeau, Tairov and Meyerhold. (Sánchez 1998, 41-3)

Sánchez outlines here the avant-garde's tendency to move away from realism and a transition to models from symbolism, which includes a rich hybrid mix of European dramatists and practitioners. Fundamentally my approach suggests that these plays also show traces of a wide variety of influences, which culminates in experimental playwriting whilst in exile. As also noted by Sánchez, the majority of this theatrical innovation was taking place outside the more conservative walls of the commercial theatres of the avant-garde and Second Republic years (Sánchez 1998, 212). The influence of Margarita Xirgu's company in the rejuvenation of the alternative Spanish stage is described by María Delgado: "Collaborating with living writers from both the generations of 1898 and 1927 she helped to cultivate a theatrical renaissance in the 1920s and 1930s not seen since the Golden Age of Calderón, Tirso de Molina and Lope de Vega" (Delgado 2003, 22-3). Delgado defines this period of the 1920s and 30s as a pivotal moment for the development of Spanish theatre of the twentieth century, depicting it as a moment of dramatic and aesthetic innovation. Similarly, Bilbatúa describes the Second Republic years as characterised by playwrights who consciously sought to transform the theatre to be aesthetically innovative and break with existing conventions. He further suggests that this reform was related to the search for a new theatre-going audience: "A partir de 1931, los intentos renovadores se orientarán, desde presupuestos a veces ambiguos y contradictorios, a la búsqueda de un nuevo público y de un nuevo teatro que responda a las exigencias de dicho público" (Bilbatúa 1976, 27). This reinforces the importance of the Second Republic years as constituting a unique moment for the theatre, given the intention of the more experimental playwrights and directors to find a new theatrical style of interaction between the stage and its audience.

The outbreak of the Civil War in 1936 and the consequent exile of the majority of Spain's intellectual and artistic milieu meant that the drive by some practitioners to pioneer new forms of theatre came to an abrupt end in Spain. As a consequence of the Franco regime from 1939 onwards and the enforcement of strict censorship legislation of the theatrical innovations that previously took place during the 1920s and 30s, were effectively reversed. As noted by Halsey and Zatlin:

In the years immediately following Franco's victory, Spanish theatre was dominated by conservative plays exalting Spain's history and myths, formulaic bourgeois dramas from the pen of ageing Nobel Prizewinner Jacinto Benavente (1866-1954), and comedies that liberal critics generally labelled 'escapist' — and hence presumably of no redeeming social or literary value. Nevertheless, many of the comedies from the 1940s and 1950s live on. (Halsey & Zatlin 1998, 137)

The prevalence of this more commercial theatre in Spain is evidenced in the return of the commercial stage to a theatre of melodrama and light hearted comedy, which was particularly prevalent during the 1940s and 1950s in Spain. The decision of Méndez, León and Lejárraga to write more plays during these post-war years and beyond shows a commitment to continuing to write theatre in exile. The ways they incorporate other traditions from Spanish and European theatre genres shows that they occupy an important space as women playwrights in the narrative of Spanish exile theatre. Given that their plays were written for performance outside of Spain, they depict very different values to those cited by Halsey & Zatlin as typical of the period, namely being escapist comedies with little social or literary value.

Beyond the theatrical historiography of Spain's avant-garde and Second Republic, another crucial context was the changes relating to Spain's

education and pedagogy. The social and educational contexts were crucial for Méndez, León and Lejárraga, given that their education, which enabled their writing, is also rooted in a desire for emancipation and liberation. Women's increased access to education was integrally linked to a larger national discourse in Spain that centred on improving and innovating education across the country. As outlined by Moreno (1993), the development of women's education in Madrid was the result of the establishment of a number of institutions. Fundamental to the development of women's education was the creation of "la Junta para la Ampliación de Estudios", which funded the establishment of La Residencia de Señoritas (1910), and was Spain's first institution to encourage advanced-level education for women. This was founded by María de Maeztu and would later lead to the establishment of the Lyceum Club Femenino. The club benefitted from the declaration of the Second Republic on 14th April 1931, the creation of Junta para la Ampliación de Estudios and from the advancements in education policy that dated from the nineteenth century:

La Residencia de Señoritas, tema de este estudio, no surgió repentinamente de la nada. A lo largo de la historia de España se pueden detectar esfuerzos por diferentes gobiernos e individuos que se preocupan por la educación superior de la mujer. Adquieren estos esfuerzos importancia en el momento de la revolución de 1868 que destrona a Isabel II e implanta un gobierno liberal. [...] Es importante señalar que la fundación de la Residencia se debe a la Junta para la Ampliación de Estudios, creación inspirada muy directamente por D. Francisco Giner y ejecutada por un grupo de sus discípulos, no llamados ya krausistas, sino institucioncitas. El principal, de quien se tratará más adelante, es José Castillejo. (Moreno 1993, 13)

Moreno traces the historical trajectory of the establishment of institutions dedicated to women's learning by describing the earlier instrumental role of the professor and educator Fernando de Castro (1814-74) in founding a number of these institutions. Particularly significant were the series of lectures he gave on the topic that had argued for the importance of women's education as a positive aspect of the greater development of society given in the "Conferencias Dominicales para la educación de la mujer" and "Academia de conferencias y lecturas públicas para la educación de la mujer" (Moreno 1993, 14). Indeed, Castro was responsible for the establishment of La Asociación para la Enseñanza de la Mujer, which would later become La Escuela de Comercio para Señoras, which between 1881 and 1884 would also result in the creation of a number of other institutions (Moreno 1993, 16).

Nevertheless, despite the greater access of education to women, their admission to higher education remained a social taboo during the 1920–30s: "No había leyes que lo prohibieran, pero la sociedad española de esa época no la toleraba" (Moreno 1933, 17). Women were still not able to participate in classes, even though the university doors were not, at a legislative level at least, closed to them. This context historically coincides with Méndez, León and Lejárraga, given that they were all mainly living in Madrid during much of the 1920s and early 1930s. Lejárraga was one of a small yet growing number of women who had a university education. She studied at La Escuela Normal Central de Maestras de Primera Enseñanza de Madrid, where she attained the complete range of qualifications from Maestra Elemental (1893), to Maestra Superior (1894) and finally Maestra de Primera Enseñanza Normal (1895) (Sastre & Vizcarra 2009, 9). She taught until 1908 and during this period she had also travelled around Europe (October 1905 to May 1906) visiting France, Belgium, England, Holland and Germany as a consequence of a grant from the Ministerio de Instrucción Pública y Bella Artes, "con el objeto de estudiar la organización escolar del estudio y el juego en las escuelas francesas, belgas e inglesas" (Sastre & Vizcarra 2009, 9). The education and grants were important for Lejárraga's development in the field of education

but also specifically for her later work in translation, given her fluency in French and English as a consequence of her travel and grants. Although they came from bourgeois families, certainly for Méndez and León, education was not encouraged. This is shown by the fact that they were autodidacts who pursued literary careers against their parents' wishes, which they describe in their autobiographies, Méndez (Altolaguirre 1990, 47) and León (González de Garay 2009, 19), Lejárraga (Leggott 2008, 102-3). The public funding from the Junta para la Ampliación de Estudios played an important role in the lives of all three of these writers, as each author obtained funding at different times to continue with their studies. Méndez also received a grant from the Centro de Estudios Históricos to study Colombian theatre (Altolaguirre 1990, 85), having successfully pursued her studies into adulthood as an autodidact. In turn León earned her BA in Filosofía y Letras from the Institución Libre de Enseñanza and was later awarded a grant to work on European dramatic tendencies, as a consequence of which she published numerous articles on the theatre of the Soviet Union (Nebrera 2003, 54).

These three authors occupied public spaces, such as universities and cultural establishments, and they were also published authors (albeit, in Lejárraga's case under the "Gregorio Martínez Sierra" pseudonym). A public facing engagement with education and the arts would be taken up by all of these writers in different forms while they were still in Spain during the Second Republic Years, as activist (Lejárraga), actress (León), teacher (Lejárraga) and poet (Méndez). Earlier on in their careers in Spain, therefore, they had already built a space of resistance in their writing as a consequence of their education as public female authors and intellectuals. The term "space of resistance" refers to the authors' use of cultural production as an affirmative means of continuing to engage with Spain whilst living under difficult circumstances of exile by creating a counter-cultural narrative. Their plays are read as repeated acts of resistance, which is shown through the energy of the writing, despite the fact that the majority of the plays were not

performed. It is a term that will be returned to later on in this Introduction, over the course of the individual chapters and the conclusion to more explicitly foreground in relation to the close readings of the three authors' plays. As female authors Méndez, León, Lejárraga challenged the dominant belief of education as a purely decorative adornment, received by women prior to marriage. Through their writing all three were active representatives in the national debates around pedagogy and emancipation. For all of them, this was not only a gender debate, but a wider social and political debate for Spain's population, given the high rates of illiteracy. This is evidenced in their autobiographies in which they all refer to the importance of educational reform for the Spanish population (Altolaguirre 1990; León 1998; Lejárraga 1952, 1989). The illiteracy rates in Spain during the early 1900s were high, at 71% for women and 56% for men in 1900 (Leggott 2008, 101), and although these figures had improved by 1930, dropping significantly to 47.5% for women and 37% for men, there was also an "increased acknowledgment of the need for improvement in the education of the female population" (Leggott 2008, 101). Their preoccupation with pedagogy was increasingly aligned to their broad left wing political beliefs and support of socialism. This is particularly the case for Lejárraga and León, who were political activists; Lejárraga for the Socialist Party and León for the Communist Party (Estébanez Gil 2003, 235-6).

Whilst Méndez, León and Lejárraga were all staunch advocates of women's emancipation, the bond that connects them to one another is their vocation as writers. It is as a result of this vocation that they shared another important cultural and intellectual space: Madrid's Lyceum Club Femenino. Founded in 1926 by the Spanish educator and feminist María de Maeztu Whitney, assisted by Carmen Baroja, Concha Méndez and Lejárraga, it was modelled on existing Lyceum Clubs in Brussels, London, Milan, New York, Paris and The Hague (Altolaguirre 1990, 49) and activities were devoted to a range of areas, including social concerns, music, art, literature,

science, and the Americas. Constance Smedley, who founded the London Lyceum, stated that the aim of the club was to “establish centres of intellectual and artistic life... [to] promote interchange and thought between the cultured women of all nations” (Brockington 2007, accessed June 2015). The Madrid club similarly described its aim as being to: “[d]efender los intereses morales y materiales de la mujer” (Leggott 2008, 102). Madrid’s Lyceum opened with 150 members, including Lejárraga and León, and by 1929 its membership had tripled to 450, which led to the establishment of another branch in Barcelona in 1931 (Leggott 2008, 103). The Lyceum Club Femenino was created from Maeztu’s earlier founding of the Residencia de Señoritas in 1915, which led her to go on to run the aforementioned Residencia de Estudiantes (1910). This was the first official and publicly funded centre to encourage women’s participation in advanced study and attracted a number of male intellectuals and writers, including Unamuno, Federico García Lorca and Rafael Alberti. The founding of the Lyceum Club Femenino in Madrid in 1926 during the Primo de Rivera dictatorship was another significant development, given that it was the first cultural organization in Spain to be established specifically for women. The influence of the international emergence of feminism at the turn of the century, and its influence in Spain, is described by Mary Nash: “La cuestión de la inferioridad intelectual de la mujer respecto al hombre fue muy debatida en la Europa y Estados Unidos del siglo XIX. Esta polémica llegó a tener cierto eco en España” (Ruiz 2008, 322). Nash traces this debate back to its emergence in prominent Spanish women intellectuals from the late nineteenth to early twentieth century, such as Concepción Arenal and Emilia Pardo Bazán. Despite the increasing visibility of a number of publicly recognised female intellectuals, this more liberal discussion of the role of Spanish women in society did not equate to an immediate change in society’s perception of women. Whilst a public debate had begun, the prevalent traditional notions of women’s roles and their intellectual inferiority remained largely in existence amidst society. Mary Nash, quoted in *La mujer en el teatro español de la II República*, describes this in the following terms:

A pesar de los múltiples argumentos de Concepción Arenal y Emilia Pardo Bazán, siguió persistiendo una amplia duda por parte de la mayoría de la población española sobre el potencial intelectual de la mujer, lo cual, a la vez, se convierte en argumento para consolidar la división sexual del trabajo y la tradicional distribución de los papeles sociales. Aún durante los años 30 de este siglo, concretamente durante el período de la Segunda República, encontramos una continua adhesión a esta idea en diversos sectores de la sociedad española. La aceptación de la inferioridad femenina es además interclasista [...]. (Ruiz 2008, 322)

It is important to highlight the social and cultural context in which these writers developed because although they were immersed in the elite avant-garde circles of Spanish writers and intellectuals they were also, as a direct consequence of their gender, rendered marginal. The Lyceum is an important cultural and educational space for all three authors who were in Madrid during Spain's avant-garde. Whilst it was important for these authors it was also marginal, shown in the fact that as a collective cultural space it remained peripheral in comparison to the male-dominated elite intellectual and artistic circles of Madrid. Although Méndez, León and Lejárraga were immersed in the elite avant-garde scene, in reality they were only included as a consequence of their relationships with key men from the group: further highlighting the marginality of these authors because of their gender. This notion of the authors as occupying a marginal space in the cultural centre is depicted in *Memoria* (León 1998), as León describes herself as the artistically inferior wife of Alberti, being “la cola de la cometa” (Marcos 1989, 43). A comparison can be drawn here with Lejárraga, who was also widely unknown as a dramaturge and writer amongst her contemporaries, having published under Gregorio Martínez Sierra's name. As highlighted in *La conspiración de*

las lectoras (Marina & Rodríguez de Castro, 2009), there was a great irony in the fact that Gregorio Martínez Sierra's books were "best sellers" amongst the members of the Lyceum, who were however unaware that the texts they were reading were co-authored, if not solely authored, by their fellow member Lejárraga (Marina & Rodríguez de Castro, 2009, 46-7). Nowhere is this irony more deeply evidenced than in the series of lectures Gregorio delivered on the topic of feminism to the Lyceum entitled: *Feminismo, feminidad, españolismo* (Martínez Sierra, 1917). These lectures made the then taboo case for the positive and progressive values of feminism, during a time when the Spanish press and majority of intellectuals publically denounced it. Discussions of feminism during the 1920-30s often portrayed feminism as being in direct opposition to femininity, characterised as a fundamentally dangerous and subversive ideology that needed to be publicly discouraged. Ángela Mañueco Ruiz describes how this was also manifested in the theatre of the period:

La polémica entre feminismo y feminidad hace correr mucha tinta en los periódicos de la época, pero proporciona poco material para el escenario. La joven moderna, la muchacha estudiante o trabajadora y, aunque con menor frecuencia, la mujer interesada en el mundo de la política, pueblan las comedias. Sus ideales coinciden en muchos puntos con los de las feministas, pero no quieren que se las incluya en ese colectivo porque temen encarnar el estereotipo de la mujer hombruna, fea y violenta. (Ruiz 2008, 464-5)

Despite these pervasive negative public connotations there were also a number of Spanish writers who sought to define feminism in a more positive light. Gregorio Martínez Sierra's *Feminismo, Feminidad, Españolismo* (1917), was an early defender of feminism as a positive social and political movement for Spain.

Moreno notes, just one year before the opening of the Lyceum Club Femenino, that Ortega y Gasset's *La deshumanización del arte* (1925) offered the antithesis of the so called "Generation of 1898"¹ with their focus upon national anguish, to reveal instead an "essentially retrogressive attitude hostile to the modernisation and Europeanisation of Spain" (Harris 1995, 4-5). This demonstrates Ortega's rejection of "the anti-Europeanism of Unamuno" in his attempt to "lower [...] the barrier of the Pyrenees to publish in translation most of the great names of the European intelligentsia. [...] The upsurge of activity in the literary avant-garde was matched by the first attempts to introduce the new visual language of avant-garde art" (Harris 1995, 7). José Antonio Marina and María Teresa Rodríguez de Castro in their book on the Lyceum Club Femenino, *La conspiración de las lectoras*, argue that 1925 is a fundamental year for the development of the avant-garde, and also pivotal to the context of the Lyceum which had been opened the year before:

Vanguardistas, universitarias, extranjeras formaban la parte más llamativa del Lyceum. Había en el aire una renovación artística. En los primeros años del siglo XX, el arte ejerció la vanguardia ideológica y social. "Eran los tiempos en que por las calles madrileñas corría la subversión y la burla", escribe María Teresa León. Al Lyceum Club acuden mujeres casadas y con hijos, las "maridas" de gente importante, de las que hablaremos después, pero también chicas, muchas de las cuales se alojan en la Residencia de Señoritas. Entre las chicas jóvenes que acuden, como socias o como invitadas, destacan tres que se han sentido fascinadas por las vanguardias de la época. (Marina & Rodríguez de Castro 2009, 81)

¹ I am using this term in order to help distinguish the different periods writers from the avant-garde were working in. This reference to "generations" is used in this capacity and not to continue to propagate the "generational fallacy" as outlined by Ugarte. Michael Ugarte. 1994. *The Generational Fallacy and Spanish Women Writing in Madrid at the Turn of the Century. Siglo XX/20th Century* 12. 261-76.

Marina and Rodríguez de Castro make the distinction between the different groups of women that worked in the Lyceum, which was populated by the so called “Vanguardistas”, such as Méndez and León. Méndez’s autobiography *Memorias* (1990) describes these as being the more conservative “wives of” important men (“maridas de sus maridos”) (Altolaguirre 1990, 49). Méndez’s description of the Lyceum in her autobiography also describes the club as an important meeting point for Spanish women writers, as a cultural space that was liberated from the confines of both domestic and public spaces where women could discuss literature openly. She gives two main reasons for this; firstly, as providing women with a limited access to education and arts a way into the club, and secondly, from a cultural perspective:

En 1926 se fundó en Madrid el Liceo Club Femenino. Era una asociación de señoras que se preocupaban por ayudar a las mujeres de pocos recursos, creando guarderías y otras cosas. Pero sobre todo era un centro cultural; tenía bibliotecas y un salón para espectáculos y conferencias. Yo fui una de las fundadoras; la directora era María de Maeztu. Este club no era exclusivo de España, sino que había otros del mismo nombre y con la misma finalidad en Nueva York, Londres y París. Al Liceo acudían muchas señoras casadas, en su mayoría mujeres de hombres importantes: la mujer de Juan Ramón, Zenobia de Camprubí, Pilar Zubiaurre y otras. Yo las llamaba las maridas de sus maridos, porque, como ellos eran hombres cultos, ellas venían a la tertulia a contar lo que habían oído en casa. Era yo la más joven y la única que escribía. Dentro de las conferencias que organizamos, una vez invitamos a Benavente, que se negó a venir, inaugurando como disculpa una frase célebre del lenguaje cotidiano: “¿Cómo quieren que vaya a dar una conferencias a tontas y a locas?” No podía entender que las mujeres nos

interesábamos por la cultura. Yo invité a García Lorca y a Rafael Alberti a dar una lectura de poemas. Dentro del grupo había dos hermanas solteras que nunca contaban nada.
(Altolaguirre 1990, 49)

In the above quotation from *Memorias* Méndez was writing retrospectively and, as with all autobiographical and testimonial writing, the veracity of memory is revealed as unreliable and fallible. Given that she describes herself as “la única que escribía”, it is clear that the artistic outputs even of the members of the Lyceum were largely invisible to each other. For Méndez omits to make reference to León, who had been writing for a number of years by the time the Lyceum had been established. Yet by contrast, she does mention her friend and fellow poet Rafael Alberti, who she cites as having played a crucial role in her early development as a poet (Altolaguirre 1990, 47). Though León herself is not mentioned in Méndez’s memoir, it is almost impossible that Méndez and León did not meet given Méndez’s close friendship with Alberti, Lorca and the rest of this elite Madrid based group of writers and intellectuals. Leggott points out that León certainly would have been at the Méndez-Altolaguirre *tertulias* and suggests:

That Méndez should silence her connections with León and with her other female contemporaries may be attributed, not only to the motivations of her autobiographical project, but also to the lack of a strong network of women writers and artists at the time. (Leggott 2008, 106)

Similarly, Castro suggests that the sort of relationships maintained by members of the Lyceum had functioned more as colleagues than friends:

No creo que hubiera entre ellas una relación tan estrecha. [...] lo que ellas buscaban era, como diría Virginia Woolf, una

“habitación propia”. Aparcan la política y la religión, porque en los estatutos del Lyceum se fueran politizando, y comenzaron a aparecer enfrentamientos. (Marina & Rodríguez de Castro 2009, 48)

The relationship between the women writers is important to establish before analysing the plays of these authors in order to further contextualise their own highly self-conscious depiction of their marginality as women authors, and how this self-consciousness is manifested in the plays. It is significant that the Lyceum sought to operate in a neutral space where political and religious differences would not be divisive or have an implication for the members of the club to focus on culture. Despite this aim, the Club was not immune to the events happening in Spain and across Europe during the 1930s and politics was increasingly debated. There were also limitations of the club that Lejárraga identifies in her discussion of class and gender in the Lyceum:

Nuestras campañas sin duda han llegado a unos cuantos grupos selectos de la clase media madrileña, pero los entusiasmos de las afiliadas al Lyceum Club y a la Asociación Femenina de Educación Cívica, hogares de nuestro feminismo, en gran parte no son —no hay que hacerse demasiadas ilusiones— sino una especie de esnobismo de buen tono. (Rodrigo 2005, 284)

The political debates of the club and existing taboos ultimately led both Lejárraga and León to become estranged from the Lyceum as a consequence of their increasingly public political stances. León’s communist beliefs and the controversy of Alberti’s open letter of forged signatures from Madrid’s artistic and intellectual elite led them to be ostracized by many. This is described by León in *Memoria*: “Renunciamos hasta el saludo de los amigos, bueno, los amigos dejaron de saludarnos. Nos criticaban” (León 1998, 172). Despite this, the Lyceum was particularly significant for Méndez’s early plays, given that it

was here that her published play *El carbón y la rosa* (Altolaguirre 1990, 97) was first read in 1935. The importance of having a shared intellectual and artistic network, and the necessarily gendered nature of this space, will be returned to in each of the chapters from the perspective of the altered positions within which these writers would operate in the context of exile.

The focus has so far been on the contexts shared by Méndez, León and Lejárraga in the earlier stages of their careers in Madrid during the avant-garde and Second Republic years. The analysis will now turn to their subsequent exile, given that all of the authors had left Spain shortly before or after the outbreak of the Civil War, Méndez in 1933 (Altolaguirre 1990, 94), Lejárraga in 1936 (Martínez Sierra 1952, 141-2), León in 1939 (Mainer 1990, 39). In this sense they have a shared narrative as exiled post Civil War authors, a generation described by Aznar Soler as “poco más que unos fantasmas perdidos en la niebla del silencio y del olvido a que los condenó la dictadura franquista” (Aznar Soler 2001, 14). Alongside this shared narrative of exile, each author also inevitably faced challenges that were specific and unique to their circumstances of exile. In the case of Lejárraga and Méndez, for instance, they faced the social stigma of being women who were separated from their husbands and lived the difficult economic consequences of this estrangement, as described by Lejárraga in *Una mujer* (Martínez Sierra 1952, 149-51) and Méndez in *Memorias* (Leggott 2008, 140). Lejárraga arrived in Latin America in 1954, following her exile from Spain in 1936 during the Civil War. In the interim she lived in many countries, including Belgium, France, America, and Mexico, to reside finally in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1954 (Blanco 2002, 175). Throughout Lejárraga’s exile she worked in translation, predominantly to maintain an income for herself and her sister in Nice, France (Martínez Sierra 1952, 157). Méndez began her exile with her husband Manuel Altolaguirre and their daughter Paloma, firstly moving to Europe then Cuba (1939-43) and then Mexico D.F. (1944). For both Lejárraga and Méndez, one of the most negative effects of exile was in fact the social

stigma they faced as a consequence of their separation from their better known husbands which in turn led to a much reduced social and artistic network. The practical implications of this for their plays written in exile was that they lacked the contacts to be able to stage their works in their host countries, as they had previously been able to do during Spain's avant-garde. Whilst León was much more embedded in the cultural, artistic and exiled Republican community in Buenos Aires, this was partly a consequence of her more socially secure status as the wife of Alberti (De la Fuente 2002, 413). Nevertheless, it is clear that León's work as a dramatist has also suffered from the inevitable association with Alberti, given that many critics have tended to read her plays through the lens of Alberti. This can be seen for example in *Teatro de agitación política 1933-1939: Rafael Alberti; Germán Bleiberg; Rafael Dieste; Miguel Hernández; María Teresa León*, where the preface to León's play situates her as having been primarily influenced by Alberti (Bilbatúa 1976). Whilst of course Alberti is an important reference point, León's value as a dramatist extends far beyond her marriage, and it is for this reason that this thesis does not incorporate this as a line of criticism.

Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that although León was deeply involved in this community, she also struggled to have her plays performed. One likely explanation for this is that as older exiled women living in Buenos Aires during the 1950s and 1960s, in the case of León and Lejárraga, in Mexico D.F. in the case of Méndez, they had even less of an opportunity to secure the necessary theatrical contacts to have their plays performed. As noted by Farnsworth, in spite of "the many independent women traveling to Buenos Aires in the mid-1910s and 1920s [...] women remained on the margins of this new cultural model" (Farnsworth 2009, accessed June 2015), and this was a landscape that did not undergo major changes through to the 1950s and 1960s, even though women were increasingly involved in radio and cinema as part of the nation building project of Argentina (Karush 2012, 216). Dauster's historiography of women's long standing contribution to Mexican

theatre especially outlines their pivotal work during “one of the most significant periods of Mexico’s cultural life [1920s and 1930s]” which “would open up the way for future women and writers” (Nigro 1996, 38). In spite of the importance and prevalence of women’s work in Mexican theatre Méndez remained on the margins, mainly because of her lack of contacts in theatre, reduced artistic network and lack of resources to invest in exploring the staging of one of her plays in a professional theatre context.

Lejárraga refers ironically to the unlikelihood of having her plays performed in the prologue to *Tragedia de la perra vida* (Martínez Sierra 2009). Indeed, having previously had plays staged during Spain’s avant-garde, all three authors would have been keenly aware of the difficulty of performance. Buffery, in her introduction to *Stages of Exile: Spanish Republican Exile Theatre and Performance*, describes this paradox of unperformed theatre written in exile:

Whilst there has been ground-breaking research into Spanish Republican exile experiences and production above all in the last two decades, far more attention has generally been granted to poetry and narrative than to theatre and performance. In part this has resulted from the perceptions that the theatre of exile is somehow ‘less than theatre’ because it has largely remained unperformed, or has not had access to its ‘natural’ audiences. (Buffery 2011, 3)

Although as described by Buffery unperformed plays written in exile have had less cultural capital than other genres, (such as autobiography, poetry and “testimonio” texts), this thesis also proposes that though the plays of the three authors remain unperformed they are worthy of more critical debate because the works are imagined as theatre and have a clear theatrical genealogy. Méndez, León and Lejárraga’s decision to return to playwriting in exile, with the

intention of public performance, is analysed as an affirmative act of emancipation and agency in exile. This thesis reassesses their plays, given that all three of these authors at different points in their careers described themselves as being first and foremost playwrights. Nevertheless, their plays have received less critical attention than their autobiographies.

Although the plays I analyse were all written in Latin America, following their authors' exile from Spain, many of their dramatic references are from the avant-garde and Golden Age theatre. In making these references they demonstrate a self-conscious awareness of transgressing the private and domestic sphere shown by writing into the public and visible space of the theatre, a sphere which was conventionally closed to women. This is most clearly manifested in the ways in which they establish a critical distance between the text and the reader or audience. Their transgression is therefore twofold, given that they enter both the male-dominated intellectual and artistic space of playwriting and the public theatrical space of theatre. The analysis of the plays locates the performance, not at the site of the stage and the audience, but instead at the point of exchange between the playwright and the reader. All three authors break with the reader's catharsis which forces them to engage more actively in the plays. In doing so they, like Brecht and Piscator, also reject the theatrical possibility of the "slice of life" poetic realism of the earlier generation of playwriting, most associated with Ibsen and Chekhov (Bryant-Bertail 2000, 2). As a consequence of the lack of reader catharsis the plays also acknowledge "the limited perspective of the single and individual" (Bryant-Bertail 2000, 2) mode of representation, using elements of epic theatre to construct alternative perspectives. Throughout the thesis I refer to the concept of the authors breaking the fourth wall for the spectator. My use of this term "breaking the fourth wall" makes reference to Brecht's epic theatre, and the concept of the Brechtian distancing effect of the audience: *Verfremdungseffekt*. Brecht and Piscator put the intellect and emotions of the audience into conflict, in order to provoke a rational self-reflection and more

critical view of the stage. As already established, this move away from realism was a fundamental element of Spain's avant-garde (Sánchez 1998, 21-2). By removing the fourth wall, so to speak, the audiences were forced into the position of being active critics, because they "cannot escape the act of bearing witness" (Morgan 2013, 56-7). This understanding of the breaking the fourth wall will be used in conjunction with reader response theory to discuss a form of performative reading that is encouraged by the authors in their plays. Before turning to this theory it is worth further defining *Verfremdungseffekt* in relation to Brecht's epic theatre from which *Verfremdungseffekt* was developed:

Jean-Paul Sartre notes that the advent of film in the early twentieth century did not destroy the theatre, as had been feared, but forced it to give up naturalism and become critically self-aware of its unique ability to represent time through concrete spatial images and space through temporal ones – and thus to show how the historical consciousness of a society is produced. That is, it was realized that theatre is able not only to naively *reflect* how the culture imagines its own temporal existence but also to *critique* the process of producing these images. Sartre discerned that in epic theater the whole theatrical apparatus became dialectical, with each element acting as a signifying language in its own way. [...] Piscator and Brecht agreed that the ideological basis of epic stage practice was Marx's historical materialism. This practice called for the relating of stage events to the material situation of the spectators and characters; the theater was to demystify the operation of social, economic, and political forces by showing how certain orders of reality had developed historically and were perpetuated. [...] If theatrical means were used in gaining real political power, then epic

theater could reveal the working of this machinery of illusion.
(Bryant-Bertail 2000, 1-3)

Alongside the Brechtian theoretical framework, this idea of the critical position of the audience, or the reader in the case of these plays, is also rooted in a Spanish dramatic heritage which emerged during the Baroque period and Golden Age. In very broad terms Jonathan Thacker describes that a fundamental aspect of the culture of Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth century is that “individuals might perceive a gap between *self* and *social role*” (Thacker 2002, xiv) and that “at the very heart of the *Zeitgeist* in early-modern Spain is an opening up of this gap, a growing self-consciousness” (2002, xiv-xv). This culminated in:

The huge turnover of generically similar plays also helped self-referentiality and intertextual play to become the norm in the theatre. Additionally, in this period of Spanish history, life itself was theatrical in a sense more mundane than the *theatrum mundi* metaphor of Calderón’s *El gran teatro del mundo* would suggest. Life and theatre are intermingled. The reasons behind this sharply perceived histrionic urge almost certainly have to do with anxieties about identity – an identity that can be broadly termed social. A poor performance could lead to a life devastated. Culturally breaking the frame can be seen as an expression of one aspect of the Baroque, a reflection of the difficulty of perceiving the difference between appearance and reality, a reaching out to the spectator who is burdened with some responsibility of interpretation. (2002, 2)

Although emerging from an entirely different context, in my analysis of Méndez, León and Lejárraga, a parallel can be drawn between the self-conscious space of their plays and the overlap between life and art. These

plays written in exile also pivot around anxieties of what identity, specifically in the tension around the effect of gender on their identity. Likewise, by creating a space of self-consciousness in the plays, the reader is put in a more active role as they are “burdened with some responsibility of interpretation”. In all three authors, they make reference to this Calderonian *theatrum mundi* metaphor, and the use of meta-theatrical devices are repeatedly deployed to highlight the opening up of a self-conscious gap. This is established in a different way to the plays of the Golden Age, because the self-conscious gap is also connected to reader response theory. All three authors create an autobiographical overlap in the plays, as they insert themselves as fictional characters in the plays, and as they all constantly blur the gap between the fact and fiction. They achieve this by inserting details of their past lived experiences from Spain’s avant-garde, and embedding cultural references to Spain’s avant-garde and Golden Age. There are also intertextual references to their own writing, in particular to the plays they had written earlier in their careers during the avant-garde years, and their autobiographies and memoirs also written in exile. By “breaking the fourth wall” or by creating a dramatic space in which the reader takes on some of the burden or responsibility of interpretation, these three authors, as was also characteristic of Golden Age playwrights, also use metatheatre to “develop a close relationship with the spectators that is based on mutual understanding” (Thacker 2002, 3). Similar also to the Golden Age plays is that all three authors move beyond theatre as entertainment, as theatre is inevitably interconnected with social commentary. As Thacker establishes:

Drama may have an explicit social or moral purpose or be merely an attempt to entertain, but, as Manfred Pfister points out:

By producing a literary text, and this is particularly true of the dramatist, the author is making a public statement. For this reason, his role as a producer of literature is not the result of a freely taken decision or the manifestation of an autonomous

identity, but is orientated towards the given social norms for this public role- in so far as he either conforms to them or breaks them. (2002, 4)

As is the case of all three authors, the theatre moves beyond entertainment to encompass a social and moral purpose, which by proxy necessarily renders it a political act. The return to playwriting after many years of not having worked in the theatre is significant for these authors because it shows a public statement, or an intended public statement, in the absence of performance. This may well have resonance with the social and moral purpose of writing, explored by dramatists such as Lope de Vega in *Deleite y doctrina* (de Vega, accessed April 2016). Here it is important to incorporate reader response theory, because in the absence of performance, and the knowledge of all three authors of the unlikelihood of performance, they have all embedded dramatic devices within their play texts that enact something of the live experience of the play and the audience, by creating a self-conscious rapport between the text and the reader. Thacker refers to a sociological definition of the “world as stage” whereby:

Role playing within the role sets up a special acting situation that goes beyond the usual exploration of specific roles; it exposes the very nature of role itself. The theatrical efficacy of role-playing within the role is the result of its reminding us that all human roles are relative, that identities are learned rather than innate. (Thacker 2002, 10)

This concept of role playing in the theatre, and its overlap with life, and applying it to reader response theory to suggest a parallel that can be established across all three authors in their plays written in exile. Firstly, to establish the overlap between Brecht’s fourth wall and the way this term has also been adopted in discussions regarding the text and the reader:

Reader-response theory (for example, Iser, 1989), which enables that breakdown of the fourth wall in adding readers' meaning-making to the question of where meaning comes from, lays the conceptual ground-work for seeing that it is, in fact, the whole project of interpretive methodologies and methods that is seeking to break through that wall, which occludes matters of power and control. (Engeli & Allison 2014, 151)

Turning to Iser to elucidate this quotation, Engeli & Allison claim that the inherent nature of the act of reading as another role play, or performance in the text. Iser underlines the centrality of performance in the reading process, as "aesthetic semblance can only take on its form by way of the recipient's ideational, performative activity, and so representation can only come to full fruition in the recipient's imagination; it is the recipient's performance that endows the semblance with a sense of reality" (Iser 1989, 243). The process of reading is therefore likened to that of an actor:

In this respect the required activity of the recipient resembles that of an actor, who in order to perform his role must use his thoughts, his feelings, and even his body as an analogue for representing something he is not. In order to produce the determinate form of an unreal character, the actor must allow his own reality to fade out. At the same time, however, he does not know precisely who, say, Hamlet is, for one cannot properly identify a character who has never existed. Thus role-playing endows a figment with a sense of reality in spite of its impenetrability which defies total determination. The reader finds himself in much the same situation. To imagine what has been stimulated by aesthetic semblance entails placing our thoughts and feelings at the disposal of an unreality, bestowing

on it a semblance of reality in proportion to a reducing of our own reality. For the duration of the performance we are both ourselves and someone else. Staging oneself as someone else is a source of aesthetic pleasure; it is also the means whereby representation is transferred from text to reader. (Iser 1989, 244)

Aside from the unfortunate recurring use of the generic masculine pronoun, the performative nature of reading as outlined here by Iser, is an aspect that is exploited by all three authors as they “break the fourth wall” to show the reader that they are playing as much of a role in the text as the characters of the plays. Lejárraga explicitly conceptualises this “source of aesthetic pleasure”, of the fundamentally performative process of the imagination in the creative act of representation being transferred from the text to the reader. By making explicit the implicit codes of communication between the reader and the text, the authors further reveal the inherently subversive function of their plays. Their transgressive nature stems from the fact that they make clear the social purpose of the plays by creating a self-conscious dramatic space in the text. The self-conscious incorporation of the playwrights either as narrators or through references to their lived experience in the plays is an act of resistance against circumstances of exile that rendered a theatrical performance near impossible. Their plays are manifestations of their marginality, a consequence of their gender and exile, given that the Republican exile has largely been described by men evidenced in the best known authors from this time being male. The specific circumstances of the authors’ exile will be explored in the individual chapters to tailor this complex reality of exile to the idiosyncrasies of each writer. All too often the discussion of exile or these plays as exile theatre has omitted to specify the very different experiences of Méndez, León and Lejárraga. In this way “teatro del exilio”, a term used to describe the plays of all three writers becomes obstructive. It refers to the general political and historical narrative of Republican exile from Spain, but cannot engage with

the very particular challenges faced by these authors as a consequence of being women.

Concha Méndez

Influential in the resurgence of critical interest in Méndez was the publication of the testimonial and autobiographical *Memorias habladas, memorias armadas* (Altolaguirre 1990) written by Méndez and her granddaughter Paloma Ulacia Altolaguirre. A key agent in this renewed scholarly interest is James Valender and notably his publication of *Una mujer moderna. Concha Méndez en su mundo (1898 – 1986)* (Méndez 2001c), which published a wide variety of Méndez's previously unpublished or little accessed material from the Concha Méndez archive, now held at the Residencia de Estudiantes in Madrid. It was also seminal for including a number of essays on a wide variety of topics and genres that proved fundamental to enabling a solid framework for academic critical analysis. Specifically, in relation to Méndez's theatre, Nieva de la Paz (2001) and Vilches de Frutos & Dougherty (1997) have been pivotal in furthering the discussion of Méndez's plays written during the avant-garde. For Méndez's plays written in exile the main critics for engendering debate include Bernard (2011; 2012) and Valender (2001c; 1999). In relation to *El Solitario* (1938-45) trilogy, which Chapter One on Concha Méndez will analyse, Valender (1999; 2001a; 2001b; 2001c) has been the only critic to carry out an analysis of this trilogy. This first chapter begins the process of critically engaging with the rich complexity of Méndez's plays through a close reading of *El Solitario* trilogy written between 1938-44 and published in 1945 and subsequently republished in 1998 (Méndez 1945; 1998). It should be pointed out that, as established by Valender over a decade ago, a number of plays and film scripts both unpublished and unanalysed remain in the Concha Méndez archive at Madrid's Residencia de Estudiantes: "En el archivo de Concha Méndez también se conservan borradores primitivos de otros tres proyectos teatrales suyos que datan de este mismo periodo: *El duelo de la razón* (1937) ... *A través del espejo*... *La estrella inquieta* ..."

(Valender 1999, 410). Chapter One seeks to respond to Valender's call for more criticism on Méndez and addresses the sustained absence of criticism on Méndez's plays.

Méndez's lifelong vocation as an author of many genres, most notably poetry, film and theatre, is interconnected with her emancipation as an educated and public facing "nueva mujer" of the avant-garde (Bernard 2012, 51). Her writing is characterised as being interdisciplinary and intertextual, and this mimics Méndez's own life and writing as a woman who consistently broke with social norms. Especially relevant to her plays is the interconnected biographical and artistic rupture with boundaries and conventions imposed upon women of her time. The physically embodied space of performance, symbolised in the static play text, is especially resonant to the transgressive texts that Méndez's plays represent. Bernard describes Méndez's subversive tendencies in her life and writing in the following terms:

la vitalidad rompedora de esquemas que se manifiesta en su corporeidad- sabemos que Concha Méndez fue una mujer muy deportista y campeona de natación-, su afición al cine, además de a la literatura, y su inclinación hacia los viajes. [...] La exigencia de la escritora por construir una subjetividad, una identidad femenina que no reprima las pulsiones y los deseos que alberga su interioridad, la lleva a representarse a sí misma en espacios relacionados con un mundo ajeno al ambiente doméstico y que tradicionalmente pertenecen exclusivamente al género masculino. (Bernard 2011, 52-3)

Building on this notion that Méndez broke with conventions, both physically and intellectually in order to construct an alternative identity, her decision to write theatre is all the more subversive, precisely because it represents the intention towards performance in the public space. In writing plays, Méndez

traverses multiple prohibited spaces: intellectual, artistic, and physical. This impulse for subversion as emancipation is also thematically and aesthetically at the centre of the *El Solitario* trilogy. This is further detailed by Méndez in an essay entitled “Historia del teatro (1942)” (Méndez 2001c), written whilst in exile in Cuba. In this essay Méndez insists on the importance of the artist remaining committed to creative and artistic production, particularly in times of extreme hardship and exile. For Valender this ideology presented by Méndez of the writer’s duty to continue to create, under circumstances of hardship and difficulty is a central notion of the *El Solitario* trilogy. He notes that consequentially there is an affirmative, rather than tragic, representation of humanity in the play: “Frente a esta angustiante situación, la autora no dudó en recomendar el retraimiento, [...] como una determinación de cultivar en soledad los valores espirituales que habían de inspirar y estructurar la sociedad del futuro” (Valender 1999, 417). This notion of the affirmative role of the writer in exile is one that will be explored through the close reading of the trilogy and in relation to Méndez’s own quest for emancipation in her life, central to which is her gender.

In *Memorias* (Altolaguirre 1990) Méndez highlights an apparent disjunction between her visible emancipation by vocally transgressing the expected activities that were socially acceptable for women during the avant-garde period. Méndez’s statement is quoted here from Miró’s chapter on *El personaje presentado*:

Yo escribí *El carbón y la rosa*, que es una obra de teatro para niños. En aquellos tiempos se había formado en Londres una compañía de teatro infantil que coincidía en su búsqueda con lo que yo había escrito. Y me fue curioso ver - una vez más - cómo en mi teatro no hablé de la problemática social de la mujer de mi tiempo. (Miró 2001c, 178)

Méndez distinguishes here between her dedication to asking questions around women's role in society during her lifetime, whilst claiming that it was not a topic she addressed in her theatre. It is this self-conscious reflection on her writing practice that is fundamental to the analysis of her trilogy. The underlying conflict of Méndez's claim has also been discussed by Bernard:

La que resulta curiosa es esta misma afirmación. La escritora está hablando de una obra para niños: ¿por qué sacar a colación la cuestión femenina? Me parece legítimo sospechar entonces que esta obra, en la intención de la autora, tenía relación con la condición de la mujer a pesar de no tenerla con su “problemática social”. [...] ¿Puede ser que quiera señalar principalmente la importancia de la libertad y de la independencia? (Bernard 2012, 58)

The tension between Méndez's affirmative negation of gender in her theatre, and a tendency towards self-consciousness in her writing is also an essential aspect of her trilogy which has not yet been discussed by other critics. This can be seen through the intertextual cross-fertilization of the wide range of genres across which she wrote, namely poetry, cinema and theatre. The chapter on *El Solitario* focuses on the experimental incorporation of a number of genres within Méndez's plays. The analysis especially connects her plays in relation to her emancipation as an autodidact, exile, and how she constructs a space of subversion and resistance in the play text.

María Teresa León

María Teresa León has also, since her death in 1988, been a writer whose literary oeuvre has been critically reclaimed through conferences, re-editions of texts and an ever growing field of critical analysis. The initial *Homenaje a María Teresa León* (León & Alberti 1990) was published following the eponymously entitled conference in Madrid in 1989. Following this *Homenaje*

there was a significant increase in the amount of criticism on her writing, particularly focusing on her prose (Estébanez Gil 1995; Torres Nebrera 1996). It also led to the republication of her autobiographical prose text, *Memoria de la melancolía* (León 1998). This was followed by a further *Homenaje a María Teresa León en su centenario* (Santonja 2003) and her inclusion in the “Biblioteca del exilio” series (Aznar Soler 2005). The increased engagement with León has critically recognised her to be an author of value in her own right, recognising that her writing has historically tended to be overshadowed by her marriage to Rafael Alberti. One consequence of this acknowledgement is the re-publication of her prose text *Juego limpio* (León 2000) and a selection of her plays *Obras dramáticas y escritos sobre teatro de María Teresa León* (León 2003a). These re-editions include another publication of her plays written in exile in Argentina and Italy, *Teatro (La libertad en el tejado & Sueño y verdad de Francisco de Goya)* (León 2003b), also published in the same year, and most recently *La historia de mi corazón* (León 2008). Chapter Two will carry out close readings of a selection of plays from these collections: *La historia de mi corazón* (León 2008); *La madre infatigable* (León 2003a); *La libertad en el tejado* (2003b) and *Sueño y verdad de Francisco de Goya* (2003b).

From one perspective León has been an important historical figure, with the *homenajes* to León having publicly commemorated her, whilst the republications of her works has made her more accessible to the wider public. In this sense her recuperation has partly been driven by a political agenda, as part of the recovery of Spanish Republican authors and their literature. Much criticism has focused on her exile in relation to national discourses of historical remembrance and recuperation of the Spanish Civil War as was formally recognised in the Ley de memoria histórica (2007). This is most clearly shown in the quantity of research carried out by the Grupo de Estudios del Exilio Literario (GEXEL) on León and indeed Aznar Soler’s republication of her plays written in exile (León 2003b). Some of the earliest publications

on her theatre focused on the plays León and Alberti had produced during the Civil War (Bilbatúa 1976). Much criticism has also focused on her earlier theatre performed during the Spanish Civil War, with “teatro de guerrillas” performed by soldiers on the front line (Aznar Soler 1993; Aznar Soler 2003b). José Monleón has taken a broader perspective of exile in his analysis of her plays, by also pointing towards the performative potential of these unperformed plays (Monleón 2005). The analysis of León’s plays in Chapter Two builds on these critical foundations for an analysis of her theatre. In the existing criticism a number of links are drawn between León’s plays and her prose (Aznar Soler 2003b). The primary purpose of my analysis is to trace the genealogy of León’s early use of agit-prop and *teatro de urgencia* tendencies first evidenced in *Huelga en el puerto* first published in 1932 (León 2003a) and her last plays written over thirty years later during the 1960-70s in exile in Argentina and Italy.

León was most actively involved in the theatre during the 1930s and her view of the purpose of the theatre reveals a lifelong commitment to the formative values of her earlier theatrical experience during the avant-garde and Second Republic. The plays written in exile incorporate aesthetic and thematic references to her belief in the ability of the theatre to engender social and political change. They are also shaped by León’s memory of these years and her experience of exile, most famously depicted in *Memoria* (León 1998). This earlier genealogy of her involvement in the Madrilenian theatre is therefore essential to an analysis of her later collection of plays written in Buenos Aires and then in Italy many decades later. León’s connection to the theatre in her autobiography and articles connect back to the complex space she had occupied in her own plays, in which the theatre represents both a space of potential and failure. This is explored by León, not only in her plays, but also in her prose fiction first published in 1959, *Juego limpio* (León 2000), which also continually returns to these memories of her experience of working on theatre during the Civil War. In *Juego limpio* the lead protagonist, Claudio,

articulates many of León's own criticisms of the Spanish stage during Franco's dictatorship:

detrás del pintoresquismo español sube siempre el cieno, lo inauténtico mugre, Los Cómicos reaccionamos mal ante las situaciones políticas porque no reconoce nuestra ingenuidad mental más que un partido: el público. Necesitamos los aplausos y luego el sueldo. Los empresarios dejaron paso libre a los sindicatos y el asalto de los mediocres fue un espectáculo repugnante. (León 2000, 217)

Her criticism particularly focuses on the lack of artistic freedom for practitioners and the stage, which she depicts as being fundamentally driven by the commercial demands of the theatre, depicted as the “espectáculo repugnante”. León's plays written in exile cannot be easily categorised within commercial theatre being staged in either Buenos Aires or Madrid at the time that she published them. As described by Karush in Argentina: “Cultural producers attempted to construct unifying national myths in order to expand the market for their products, but their efforts generally failed to overcome the deep classism of popular melodrama” (Karush 2012, 216). Given the complexity of this cultural landscape León's plays, incorporating elements of melodrama, had a very different audience in mind to those of Argentina from the 1940s and particularly during 1955-76. The analysis of León's plays will particularly focus on this complex political and theatrical space, and the importance of her lifelong commitment to writing as a form of emancipation. As stated by León in *Memoria*, writing was a fundamental act of resistance directly connected to her emancipation: “Escribo con ansia -afirma- sin detenerme, tropiezo pero sigo. Sigo porque es una respiración sin la cual sería capaz de morirme. No establezco diferencias entre vivir y escribir” (Estébanez Gil 2003, 29).

María de la O Lejárraga García

María de la O Lejárraga García / María Martínez Sierra or, María Lejárraga, as I will refer to her over the course of Chapter Three, wrote prolifically across a wide range of genres. These genres include theatre, prose, children's fiction, translation and political essays reflecting her work as an activist for Spain's socialist party prior to and during the Civil War. The critical recovery of much of Lejárraga's literary oeuvre has been driven by two main agendas, the first of these is political, to recognise her as an exiled Republican author, and the second has been a feminist reclaiming of her contribution to the Martínez Sierra pseudonym. The political reclaiming of Lejárraga is evident in the republication of the speeches she wrote and delivered during her time as the Socialist Party representative for Granada in 1933, and subsequently republished in *Ante la república: conferencias y entrevistas de María Martínez Sierra* (1931-2) (Martínez Sierra 2006). This second wave feminist reclaiming of Lejárraga as an author from the 1970s onwards has been part of a more widespread agenda of incorporating more women into the Spanish canon and of acknowledging their systematic exclusion (Delgado 2003; 2006; 2007; 2011; 2012). Lejárraga has also received various *homenajes*, portraying a similar trajectory to León's historical reclaiming. The first of these conferences entitled *Homenaje del Ateneo Riojano a María de la O Lejárraga* (Sastre & Torrecilla 1995), was later followed by the publication of *María Martínez Sierra y la República: ilusión y compromiso* (Sastre 2002). These conferences have been vital to reclaiming Lejárraga and establishing her importance as an author whose works have been historically overlooked. This reclaiming of her both as an author and historical literary figure is evidenced in Antonina Rodrigo's biography of Lejárraga (Rodrigo 2005). As a playwright, the major critical recuperation has come from recognising her collaborative authorship on a vast number of plays written and staged during the avant-garde which had until more recent years been solely attributed to her husband Gregorio Martínez Sierra (O'Connor 1975; 1977; 1978; 2003). This renewed interest in Lejárraga, specifically in relation to her theatre, is

evidenced in the numerous re-editions of her plays written in exile and published under her married name María Martínez Sierra. These reprints were edited and republished by Eduardo Pérez-Rasilla, *Teatro escogido* (Pérez-Rasilla 1996), and Juan Aguilera Sastre and Isabel Lizarraga Vizcarras, *Tragedia de la perra vida y otras diversiones: Teatro exilio 1939-1974* (Martínez Sierra 2009). Chapter Three carries out a close analysis of the prologues to *Tragedia de la perra vida*, *El amor vuela*, *Es así* and *Televisión sin pantalla* and the plays *Tragedia de la perra vida*; *Sueños en la venta*; *Muerte de la locura* (Martínez Sierra 2009).

Whilst living in Mexico she began to write her autobiographical text, *Gregorio y yo, medio siglo de colaboración*, first published in 1953 (Martínez Sierra 1953; 2000). Much less critical attention has been paid to the play she wrote in exile in 1954, the same year of her arrival in Buenos Aires: *Tragedia de la perra vida* originally published in the *Fiesta en el olimpio* collection first published in 1960 (Martínez Sierra 2009). Her early commercial success as a playwright has led her to be described in the title of O'Connor's article as "Spain's First Successful Woman Dramatist" (O'Connor 1978). Despite the wide breadth of her writing, Lejárraga in a letter to María Lacrampe stated that: "el arte dramático es mi oficio" (Martínez Sierra 2009, 39-40). There is a clear genealogy between the style and content of these plays co-authored by Lejárraga during the avant-garde under the pseudonym of her husband Gregorio Martínez Sierra, and those she would subsequently write in exile. Lejárraga's career as a dramaturge pre-dates both Méndez and León's work in the theatre by approximately a decade. These plays began to be published and staged under the "Gregorio Martínez Sierra" pseudonym from 1908, and marked the start of a collaboration that would span right through to Gregorio's death in 1947. Over the past few decades there have been numerous publications that have focused specifically on the extent of Lejárraga's contribution to Gregorio's pseudonym, uncovering the integral role she played in writing these plays (O'Connor 1977 & 2003; Sastre & Vizcarra 2009;

Rodrigo 1995). Gregorio is credited with having been more involved in the performances of the plays, as director of *Teatro Eslava*, and Lejárraga more with the writing of the texts. As Sastre & Vizcarra outline here, in the early years of their collaboration, Lejárraga left her teaching to focus exclusively on writing:

Gregorio fue asumiendo otras múltiples ocupaciones, como las ya aludidas: la fundación de revistas, la creación y dirección literaria de editoriales de prestigio como Renacimiento (1910) o Estrella (1917) y, sobre todo, la práctica teatral con la Compañía Lírico Dramática que entre 1916 y 1926 pondría en marcha el renovador Teatro de Arte en el madrileño Teatro Eslava, con giras por toda España y, tras la salida del Eslava, por casi todos los países hispanoamericanos. Consecuentemente, la participación de Gregorio en la escritura de los numerosos libros que en estos años aparecieron con su firma tuvo que ir decreciendo por necesidad, hasta ser prácticamente nula a partir de un momento, que podríamos cifrar en torno a 1910, fecha de la publicación de su última gran novela, *El amor catedrático*, donde la pluma de María se hace más y más evidente. (Sastre & Vizcarra 2009, 12-3)

During these years Gregorio directed the Compañía Lírico Dramática based at Teatro de Arte in Teatro Eslava, Madrid, which were important landmarks in the evolution of Spain's avant-garde theatre scene. His involvement in the development of Spain's theatre during this period was central for bringing some of the most acclaimed playwrights of the twentieth century to the stage. This is evidenced in the commissioning and staging of Lorca's first play, *El maleficio de la mariposa*, in the Teatro Eslava on 22nd March 1920 (Bilbatúa 1976, 13-4).

This context further highlights that Lejárraga was deeply immersed in avant-garde theatre being staged in Spain. During this avant-garde period, Lejárraga enjoyed commercial success and an established career as a playwright under Gregorio's pseudonym and saw the majority of her plays staged in Madrid. For her contemporaries, of course, this success was largely invisible given that the authorship of the plays were attributed to Gregorio. This is an important difference between Lejárraga when compared to Méndez and León, that from 1909 until the 1920s she had seen the plays they had written be performed. However, this commercial success as a playwright would not be matched during her years of exile, given that she was no longer embedded in the dramatic community. This experience is documented in her autobiographical *Una mujer por caminos de España* (Martínez Sierra 1952, 1989), first published in 1952, which focuses on the period of the Second Republic, the Civil War and her subsequent exile to Europe and the Americas. Lejárraga had experienced great difficulty in getting her plays published and staged during her exile. A translation of her play *Es así* (*That's the way of life*) (Martínez Sierra 2009) was performed in State College, Tempe on the 15th of November 1950, with the help of her colleague and translator, Collice Portnoff (Martínez Sierra 2009, 31). She also later published an anthology of her plays *Fiesta en el Olimpio* (Martínez Sierra 2009) in Buenos Aires the collection that I will be analysing in the chapter. The role of the theatre for her life had therefore radically changed, from having been a successful career and primary source of income, to one she managed alongside other paid work, such as translation.

Returning to discuss all three authors, Nieva de la Paz has already discussed the overlap that can be found in the "testimonio" (Nieva de la Paz 2006) writing of Spanish women authors. These include Méndez and León, although the statement she makes regarding their writing also applies to Lejárraga:

La lucha denodada por alcanzar nuevas vías de libertad y emancipación personal a través del trabajo creativo da paso en estas autobiografías al detenido recuento de todos esos aspectos que configuran la trayectoria literaria de cada una de ellas: hitos de trayectoria editorial, la recepción de su obra por parte de los críticos y los vínculos con la sociedad cultural coetánea. (Nieva de la Paz 2006, 22)

At the centre of the close readings of these plays is a similar recognition that the very act of writing is also an act of emancipation. I show that the texts manifest a continuation of this struggle for liberty and emancipation in new and interesting ways under circumstances of exile. In the authors' return to playwriting they all appropriate theatre as a space of resistance. The act of writing was a subversive act for a woman to be engaged in, not only during the avant-garde and Second Republic, but also in their subsequent years of exile. Their decision to write for the public domain of theatre, for performance, was a doubly transgressive choice. The previous experience of all the authors as playwrights during the avant-garde makes it clear that in writing their plays they would have been aware of the difficulty they would encounter in trying to stage them. I suggest that this context of the near impossibility of performance, and the authors' understanding of this, is manifested across all their plays through the creation of a self-conscious dramatic space. The combination of past theatrical tendencies from the avant-garde and breaking the "fourth wall", creates a playful rupture in exile with past theatrical traditions which is driven by their continued emancipation through artistic production. One important device used to create a self-conscious theatrical space is meta-theatre and the incorporation of meta-theatrical devices, such as the use of the play within the play. The effect of these devices makes an intentional break with the readers' catharsis. This is a repeated shared strategy deployed in the plays which force the reader into a critical position. In the three chapters I refer to the reader, given the plays

remain unperformed and were written also in the knowledge of the unlikelihood of performance. Whilst I analyse the inherent performative features of the play texts, and incorporate some references to performance theory, I refer to the reader as opposed to the audience. The plays are spaces of resistance in exile because writing a play, whether or not it is performed, is a political act. It is unclear whether the authors had intended for the plays to be performed or even published in some cases, but it is precisely this ambiguity that frames them in an interesting liminal space between performance and text. The symbiotic relationship between the theatre and society is described by Virtudes Serrano in the following terms:

Hablar de teatro lleva a hablar de sociedad en varios sentidos porque el complejo fenómeno teatral completa su ciclo cuando se muestra ante el público y porque el teatro muestra, en mayor medida y con más claridad que otros géneros, el entorno en que se produce. Desde esta perspectiva, el teatro está también directamente vinculado a los fenómenos políticos, bien porque temáticamente los refleje, bien porque la organización de un país condiciona de manera evidente sus manifestaciones artísticas. De otro lado, la metateatralidad, que ha salpicado las piezas dramáticas desde los clásicos, se convierte en las actuales en eje de reflexión temática y fórmula de estructuración dramatúrgica. (Serrano 1997, 75)

Serrano claims here that theatre can be distinguished from other cultural productions because it tends to be more deeply connected with and reflective of the society in which it is produced, and therefore more directly affiliated with politics. She also refers to the way in which meta-theatre is used to reveal the tension between theatre and society. Similarly, all three authors make explicit and less explicit references to their circumstance of exile and to the post-war context in which they were living. This manifests itself in different

ways, as both Méndez and Lejárraga directly reference the Civil War, whilst Méndez depicts it as more of an abstract reference to her emotional pain, or “duelo” (Persin 2009, 81). The creation of a self-conscious theatrical space reflects the authors own marginal position, as women playwrights in exile. This thesis addresses the current critical absence of a discussion of the complex richness of these texts which are driven by questions of gender, exile and marginality. In doing so the thesis seeks to widen the parameters of existing research on these three exiled Spanish playwrights, and more generally to address the need to include more women playwrights’ critical discussion of these themes. The thesis renegotiates these lesser discussed play texts as important cultural objects in the discussion of Spanish Republican exile theatre. In this way it seeks to contribute to this growing field of research, which has historically been overlooked in favour of other genres with more cultural capital.

The context of avant-garde theatre, education and cultural spaces for women in Madrid has been outlined here, as a means of mapping some shared spaces they inhabited prior to exile. In the individual chapters these are then specifically rooted in relation to the context of the authors’ lives, their writing, their plays and the specific circumstances of their exile. Although the plays were intended for performance, the viability of this happening was dependent on many factors outside the authors’ control. Some of the main barriers to performance were the need for contacts in the theatres of their host countries and financial backing. Méndez, León and Lejárraga were well aware of the difficulty of getting their plays performed in exile, especially given that they are all experienced in theatre production through the performance of their plays or staged readings in Madrid prior to the Civil War. Yet, in spite of the evident difficulty of getting their plays performed and the inherently non-commercial nature of the plays for the countries and years they were written in, all continued to write plays. Whilst in exile all of the authors were earning an income from different genres of writing, such as articles, translation, prose

texts, radio drama and poetry. The authors' seemingly incongruous decision to continue to write plays under conditions of marginality in exile is connected to writing as a sustained act of emancipation. The bond that connects the authors is precisely that whilst all three wrote prolifically across many genres, they begin and end their careers as playwrights. The thesis analyses these plays from a new perspective, rooted in the marginality of their plays conveying a self-conscious space of theatrical reflection, which is integrally connected to gender and exile.

Chapter One: Concha Méndez

El solitario

This chapter will focus on two plays from Méndez's trilogy entitled *El solitario* which were written and published in exile from Spain between 1938 and 1944. The first part of the trilogy, *Nacimiento*, the prologue, was written in Madrid and Brussels; the second *Amor* in La Habana, Cuba and the third and final part entitled *Soledad* was published in Coyocoán, Mexico. *El solitario- Prólogo. Nacimiento* was published in 1938 in the April edition of *Hora de España, XVI*, followed three years later in 1941 by the second play, *El solitario: Misterio en un acto (Amor)* published in La Habana, Cuba (Méndez 2001c, 72-3) and republished in 1998 (Méndez 1998). This later version included a prologue written in 1941 by María Zambrano (Zambrano 1998), who was also in La Habana at the time and published with La Verónica, the press that Altolaguirre and Méndez had founded whilst in La Habana. Méndez wrote the third part of the trilogy, *El solitario: Momento de soledad (Soledad)*, originally in 1944 whilst living in La Coyoacán in Mexico D.F., and it was subsequently published in Mexico in 1945 in *América* magazine (Méndez 1945). The plays have a similar plot and allegorical characters, but fundamentally differ given *Amor*'s happy ending, compared with *Soledad*'s tragic ending. The plot driving both plays centres on the existential struggle between love and solitude of the main protagonists of Farero, *Amor*, and Solitario, *Soledad*. The plot focus in both *Amor* and *Soledad*, centres on the narrative of the main protagonists' existential struggle, confronting questions of identity, memory and loss. The use of allegorical characters in both plays is used to theatricalise the oppositional pull between love and solitude. Zambrano describes this fundamental struggle in her 'Introduction': "Pero la vida, mientras dura, no tiene unidad; es múltiple y contradictoria; no es silencio, sino tumulto, lucha y discordia que sólo la muerte doma" (Zambrano 1998, 11). It is this human condition of discord that drives the dramatic intention of both plays of the trilogy. Méndez's

preoccupation with identity and selfhood is also a manifestation of how in the twentieth century the “lines of fracture in this fantasy of the transparent subject - lines which were perhaps always visible - begin to deepen and multiply” (Jacobs 2001, 2). The focus of this chapter is on two plays from the trilogy: *Amor* and *Soledad*. This study does not include the prologue *Nacimiento* because there is not a copy or manuscript of this text in the “Archivo de Concha Méndez” in the *Residencia de Estudiantes*, Madrid.

The plays Méndez wrote earlier on in her career during Spain’s avant-garde have been more widely discussed critically than those she wrote during exile. In part this is a consequence of the fact that a number of these plays were performed, for example, *El carbón y la rosa* (1935) was read at Madrid’s Lyceum club in 1936 (Nieva de la Paz 2001, 168). Nieva de la Paz also says that an earlier play, *El ángel cartero* (1931) had been read at the same club during the “fiesta de Reyes de 1929”, alongside Ernestina de Champourcin’s *Fábrica de estrellas* (Nieva de la Paz 2001, 168-9). Of her plays written in exile only one has been staged, as discussed by Bernard in her introduction to the re-edition of *La caña y el tabaco* first written in 1942 (Méndez 2011) and published and performed whilst Méndez was living in La Habana (Méndez 2001c, 68). In part this was a consequence of the large artistic and literary exiled community, of which Méndez and Altolaguirre were involved with La Verónica press, which meant there was a ready audience and cultural space for staged readings. However, the difficulty of accessing the plays of Méndez has been previously noted by Miró, who stated that “las obras teatrales de la escritora madrileña no son de fácil consulta; de hecho, varias siguen inéditas” (Miró 2001c, 177). Since Miró’s observation, a number of Méndez’s plays, including those written during Spain’s avant-garde and later on in exile from Spain have been republished by the Asociación de Directores de Escena de España (ADE), including: *El pez engañado*; *Las barrandillas del cielo*; *Ha corrido una estrella* (Méndez 2006) and *La caña y el tabaco* (Méndez 2011).

Returning to the *El solitario* trilogy, all of these plays, although published in magazines, remained unperformed during Méndez's lifetime. Indeed, one of the many possible explanations for why this trilogy has received scarce criticism is in part due to the lack of performance and concurrently a diminished cultural capital. To quote Delgado: "But theatre needs to be performed. Theatre is collective work, and it doesn't happen on its own" (Delgado 2003, 1). In La Habana the close-knit artistic community meant there was more possibility of collective work taking place. In her speech "Historia de un teatro (1942)" given in La Habana, Méndez makes a close connection between the genealogy of her interest in the theatre in Spain from her childhood, to her continued need to write theatre in exile:

Así lo pensé, y fue hacia el escenario adonde se dirigió mi idea fija. ¿Por qué razón? Porque la idea de hacer teatro la llevaba en la sangre, y todo mi ser se removió en aquel primer encuentro. A través de los años, despierta y dormida, soñé y soñé de todos modos con una auténtica actuación. (Méndez 2001c, 63)

By contrast, in Mexico, her involvement in the exile community and with the theatre was much more limited. Méndez's isolation following her move to Mexico is one obvious factor for her plays not being performed. She was not a part of Mexico's theatre scene in 1944, nor for the many decades she lived there, and was more isolated than she had been in La Habana. Altolaguirre describes her radically altered circumstances, of experiencing social exclusion and no longer pertaining to literary or artistic groups: "Concha Méndez tampoco pudo encajar en el grupo social de los exiliados, más allá del trato con dos o tres amistades íntimas, con quienes se juntaba, ya fuera por vecindad o por afinidades literarias" (Altolaguirre 1990, 17). Méndez connects this social exclusion to the fact that she was not taken seriously as a poet, thus occupying a marginal space as a writer both in Madrid during the avant-garde years, and in Mexico:

De hecho, como había ocurrido antes de la guerra, los hombres se negaban a ver en ella otra cosa que la mujer de un poeta; nunca quisieron reconocerla como una poeta por cuenta propia, y eso a partir de que su vocación ya estaba latente desde mediados de los años 20, mucho antes de que ella se casara. Y, claro, esta discriminación se agudizó a partir de 1944, fecha en la que ella y su marido se separaron. Aquí en México, se vinculó, durante un tiempo, con un grupo de mujeres que editaba la revista *Rueca*; gracias a ellas pudo publicar dos de sus libros: *Poemas, sombras y sueños* (1944) y *Villancicos* (1944). Sin embargo, su obra y su figura han permanecido desconocidas en este país. Es decir, le ha pasado lo que a la mayoría de los artistas del exilio español: han perdido su lugar en la historia literaria de ambos países, tanto en la de España como en la de México. (Altolaguirre 1990, 16-7)

The social and artistic exclusion that she experienced as a poet in Mexico, made it clear that any attempts at staging her plays would have been extremely difficult if not impossible. In 1998, in a posthumous attempt to reignite greater public interest in this trilogy, Maya Smerdou Altolaguirre, the niece of Manuel Altolaguirre, republished a facsimile edition of *Amor*. This edition included a prologue by María Zambrano and Manuel Altolaguirre's drawings of the characters of the play. Smerdou Altolaguirre's stated intention in the "Nota Editorial" was that the facsimile would be used for a performance: "Contra viento y marea, esta obra se estrenará en Andalucía en fecha breve y, dirigida por Luis Araujo, será representada por actores malagueños con la colaboración especial de Aurora Bautista" (Méndez 1998, 1). Assuming a performance did take place, there has been no documentation of this happening in Andalucía in the major archives, such as El Centro de Documentación Teatral (CDT) in Madrid or the archives of La Real Escuela

Superior de Arte Dramático (RESAD).² By contrast *Soledad* remains the lesser known text of the two, given that it had neither been republished nor staged since its original publication in Mexico. Despite *Amor* being republished in 1998, neither *Amor* nor *Soledad* has received critical or indeed public interest and this absence is all the more stark when compared with the numerous scholarly studies of her poetry and autobiography.

Méndez's preface to *Soledad* from its original publication in *América* magazine gives clear instructions as to the genre of the piece:

Este acto, que puede representarse por sí solo como teatro de cámara, pertenece asimismo a una trilogía o tríptico teatral que con otros dos actos titulados: "Nacimiento" – título del prólogo publicado en *Hora de España* en 1938– y "Amor" –título del texto editado en La Habana–, forman un conjunto representable a la vez, unidos por el nexo de la misma idea, que es la vida de *El solitario*, título común de las tres partes, "Nacimiento", "Amor" y "Soledad". (Miró 2001c, 181)

In this description Méndez describes the trilogy as a "tríptico teatral" pertaining to the "teatro de cámara" genre. She stresses the intertextuality of the plays and the importance of reading them as belonging to the same collection (*Nacimiento, Amor, Soledad*). The term "tríptico teatral" refers to an experimental theatre form, characterised as: "Un puente entre la plástica y el teatro" (Teatral Alternativa 2015, accessed June 2015). In the *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española*, "teatro de cámara" is defined as: "El experimental y artístico que se presenta en locales pequeños y, a menudo, en

² There is however documentation of one of Manuel Altolaguirre's plays that Maya Smerdou Altolaguirre attempted to stage, *El filtro de las maravillas*, in an article from *El País* 1978 entitled "Se impidió la representación de una obra de Altolaguirre en la Complutense". Given that this homenaje was not able to be carried out, it remains unclear as to whether Méndez's play was performed:
http://elpais.com/diario/1978/02/11/sociedad/255999609_850215.html

representaciones excepcionales” (RAE 2015, accessed June 2015). There is a tension between the experimental genre of the plays and the editorial decision of the magazine to put the plays in the “teatro para leer” section. This shows the conflict throughout these texts between their having been written for performance, and the absence of this.

Another important detail relating to the genre of the trilogy is Méndez’s reference to her use of the *auto sacramental* in the plays. Méndez describes the trilogy as belonging to this Golden Age genre in an interview entitled “Concha Méndez (1967)”: “En La Habana escribí la obra teatral *La caña y el tabaco*, alegoría antillana, en verso; y en verso también el *auto sacramental El solitario*, editado allí con prólogo de la escritora María Zambrano” (Méndez 2001c, 22). Méndez’s use of the *auto sacramental* genre marks a rupture from the Cuban folkloric inspired plays such as *La caña y el tabaco* (Méndez 2011), she had been writing in La Habana in 1942. As explored by Bernard (2011) Méndez uses sugar and tobacco, two products typical of Cuba as allegorical characters in the play alongside folkloric inspired imagery and rhyme schemes. As noted by Bernard: “Méndez participa en el redescubrimiento del teatro calderoniano, interés que la une a otros representantes de la cultura de los años treinta, como Lorca o Hernández” (Bernard 2011, 48). It is also in contrast to the plays written in the early 1900s, spanning the avant-garde psychological plays, such as *El personaje presentido* (Méndez 1931), and to her aforementioned children’s plays written during the avant-garde years. All of these earlier plays use poetic verse, and *El solitario* trilogy also included contemporary poetic form and returned to the *auto sacramental*. My reading of *Amor* and *Soledad* analyses the plays as affirmative acts of her playwriting which create a space of resistance. In her prologue to *Memorias*, Altolaguirre describes Méndez’s refusal to live in a nostalgic and melancholic past:

No le interesaba, a través de sus *Memorias habladas*, saldar

cuentas con su pasado. Estaba en su cuarto, amplio e iluminado, con vistas a un jardín que ella sembró, aceptando el fluir de su memoria, sin reproches ni remordimientos: “¿Y si hubiera pasado esto, o aquello...; o si no hubiera salido de España...; y si... etc?” Nada de esto. Afirmaba ser ciudadora del mundo. Decía que su espíritu no tenía fronteras y que, gracias a su conocimiento de ambos mundos, el europeo y el americano, su vida interior se había ensanchado y enriquecido. (Altolaguirre 1990, 19)

Zambrano reinforces Méndez’s lifelong view of herself as a “ciudadora del mundo”, a concept repeated in a number of her early interviews collated in Valender’s edited *Una mujer moderna* (Méndez 2001c). A detailed account of Méndez’s life is also given in his publication *Manuel Altolaguirre y Concha Méndez, poetas y impresores* (Valender 2001a), which outlines the numerous and often unaccompanied travels made by Méndez to the UK, Belgium, Argentina and France during the early 1900s (Valender 2001a, 49). The result of this travel was Méndez’s cosmopolitan view of her nationality and rich cultural knowledge. Prior to her exile Méndez had always felt herself to be part of a wider international community extending beyond Spain. As Altolaguirre stresses, exile for Méndez had many positive and enriching benefits, and this assertion reinforces a reading of *Soledad* as an affirmative reclaiming of imagination from the perpetual melancholia of the past. Méndez was already in exile in Spain and because of her unconventional opportunities to travel unaccompanied to Argentina and Europe, she already occupied a subversive space that was outside the expected parameters of the bourgeoisie. For Méndez, exile represented these conflicting states of melancholia and loss, but also more positive and affirmative experiences of travel and the chance to live in different cultures. This is most explicitly depicted in her positive experience in exile in La Habana where she describes arriving as an

“extranjera” although soon she says: “me incorporé por entero a su vida” (Méndez 2001c, 74).

Amor

In *Amor* and *Soledad* the characters are allegorical, following the *auto sacramental* tradition, seen in their allegorical names. These allegorical characters can be divided into two groups: the first belongs to transitory human states, such as Solitude and Love. The second group represent fixed unchanging elements, such as Time and Light. Méndez characterises these as Luz being symbolic of motherhood and Muchacha of Amor. In the facsimile re-edition of *Amor*, the illustrations of the characters visually represent them in the play. Although these different characters have similar symbolic functions in both versions, they have different names. The main characters of this version are: Luz (who has the same role as Madre); Farero (who has the same role as Solitario); Muchacha (who has the same role as Amor); Soledad (who has the same role as Soledad). The similarity of the names and allegorical function of the characters shows the intertextual narrative across the trilogy. In both versions of *Amor* and *Soledad*, there is a conflict between Life / Love (shown in Amor / Luz / Madre) and Death / Solitude (shown in Soledad/ Solitario). Valender has likewise pointed out that: “El solitario es una pieza rica en intertextualidades” (Valender 1999, 418). In Valender’s analysis he describes the references made by Méndez to some of her contemporaries, such as Luis Cernuda, Jorge Manrique, Antonio Machado, Manuel Altolaguirre, Rubén Darío de Cantos (Valender 1999, 418). My close reading will focus on the intertextual references across a range of Méndez’s own writing.

The internal and ontological struggle of Farero's crisis is enacted on stage but ultimately has a happy ending. The happy ending comes as Luz, both the light of the lighthouse and mother of Farero, steers a boat through a storm to bring him Muchacha, his shipwrecked love and future wife. Throughout this play Soledad tries to lure El Farero to her, rather than marry the Muchacha. The final scene of *Amor* is a happy ending with the lovers reunited for good, and Farero, though attracted to the tempting Soledad, chooses to banish her from his company. Throughout the play the tension between freewill and destiny are dramatized in Farero's choice between Solitude (Soledad) or Love (Muchacha). This decision making process embodies the internal conflict through the allegorical characterisation and use of the *auto sacramental*. In *Amor*, the play is set in a lighthouse where the lighthouse keeper, Farero, and his mother, Luz, live. From the opening scene, the audience is presented with Farero's conflict of deciding whether to choose between Solitude or Love; of living alone in the lighthouse with Soledad or marrying the Muchacha. This battle of wills is dramatized by the allegorical characters of the seasons—Otoño, Invierno, Primavera, Verano—entering onstage in a dance that embodies Farero's conflict (Méndez 1998, 27-33). This use of allegorical characters symbolically represents a struggle that uses a characteristic of the auto sacramental, using allegory and allegorical characters to compare one image with another:

El término mismo de *alegoría* desafía a sus más entusiastas definidores, aunque todos están de acuerdo en que la alegoría es una figura retórica que expresa una cosa para dar a entender otra, partiendo de la etimología griega del vocablo *allos* (otro) y *agoria* (hablar). [...] En esta definición la que también forma la base de la exposición de Heinrich Lausberg, quien dice en su *Manual de retórica literaria*: La alegoría es al pensamiento lo que la metáfora es a la palabra aislada: la alegoría guarda, pues, con el pensamiento mentado en serio una relación de

comparación. La relación de la alegoría con la metáfora es cuantitativa; la alegoría es una metáfora continuada en una frase entera (a veces más). (Fothergill-Payne 1977, 21)

This use of allegorical characters and this definition of allegory is an important one for the trilogy as a whole, and particularly for *Soledad*.

Soledad

In the “Nota” prefacing *Soledad*, Méndez depicts the existential struggle between life and solitude through a reference to Oscar Wilde:

Oscar Wilde nos dice que “siempre matamos lo que más queremos”. El ser se sumerge en su soledad, que es su propia muerte por lo mismo que es su propia vida. Y vida y soledad, vienen a traducirse en suma en la misma cosa. El amor es lo que fluctúa entre la muerte y la vida, con su razón de ser, pero sin ser más que una luz en el camino. (Méndez 1945, 2)

Méndez uses this supposition that we will always kill what we most love to propose that, as a consequence, humanity is submerged in a conflicted condition: living in a state of solitude, which paradoxically comprises of both death and life. *Soledad* is a dramatization of this metaphysical concept, using allegorical characters to embody this struggle. In the play there are four main protagonists: Amor and Madre (representing Love, Life and Conscience); Soledad (representing Solitude & Death); Solitario (representing Humanity).

The plot explores the conflict of the lead protagonist, Solitario and his dilemma of having to choose between Amor or Soledad. In this second version of the play, he chooses Soledad instead of Amor. Soledad poisons Amor’s ghost, enacting a tragic end to *Soledad*. There are many parallels between the first version, *Amor*, and this second version, *Soledad*. The

characters fundamentally remain the same although they adopt different names: Solitario (previously Farero), Madre (previously Luz), Los colores (previously “Las Estaciones”), Calendario (previously Pasado) and Amor (previously Muchacha). In *Soledad*, the colours are brought onstage to bring the memory of Amor back to life through the personified Azul, Amarillo, Verde, Rubí, Rosa, Blanco and Estrella (Méndez 1945, 12-23). There are also other characters introduced in the *Soledad* version, such as: Recuerdo and Destino. The only character whose name remains unchanged across both versions is Soledad. Her characterisation is also very similar and in both cases her appearance is very similar, she is described as being shrouded in a grey garment, and grey imagery is repeatedly used visually to depict her proximity to loneliness and death. The main protagonists Farero / Solitario are both tempted by solitude, represented through the figure of Soledad. Although Solitario recognises the happiness Amor would bring to him, he chooses Soledad and in so doing a retreat to a life of solitude. The characterisation of Amor as a ghost brought back to life by memory in *Soledad*, represents Solitario’s guilty conscience. Soledad is a lead character in both plays. By the end of *Soledad*, following on from Soledad’s poisoning of Amor, Solitario and Soledad are visually represented as the same character, making a reference to the depiction of life as one interconnected and conflicted entity. The play opens and ends with a grey stage, symbolizing Solitario’s return to solitude. In this version Madre plays a very different role to Luz. Rather than being a catalyst for change, she is embodied as a ghost who haunts the conscience of Soledad and Solitario. In the scene following Soledad’s poisoning of Amor, it is Madre who appears on stage immediately following her death. The effect of the death of Amor is shown through the change of mise-en-scène on the stage, which is plunged into a grey light, conveying a move to solitude from love: “(Salen los Angeles llevándose en brazos al Amor. La Soledad cierra las cortinas de fondo y se dispone a quitar todo lo que hay de color en la estancia dejándola enteramente gris.)” (Méndez 1945, 30). As Soledad menacingly states, the grey lighting of the stage is a reflection of the tragic state that

Solitario will return to: “Cuando él vuelva que no encuentre / si no el gris en su aposento. / Ya su Destino ha de verle / solo entre grises envuelto” (Méndez 1945, 30). This play explores humanity’s struggle between the opposing desires of existing independently in solitude and experiencing life as part of a community. Soledad is the character most representative of this craving for solitude, which is linked to destruction and creativity.

In *Amor* and *Soledad* the struggle between the primary allegorical characters: Solitario / Farero; Muchacha / Madre / Luz and Soledad depicts the existential struggle between life and death, through love and solitude. In the *auto-sacramental*, it is also clear that this existential struggle forms part of a stock motif in which: “El tema general del drama barroco es el hombre como campo de acción de dos fuerzas contrarias que hacen de su vida una situación conflictiva permanente” (González 1987, 50). Both versions explore this state of living in perpetual internal conflict as the action on the stage externally embodies this interior turmoil of the main protagonists. In *Soledad*, the inevitability of Amor’s tragic end highlights a recurring tension in the play between a pre-ordained fate and freewill. This is made evident in the inclusion of the allegorical character Destino in *Soledad*. It suggests that Solitario’s destiny is already decided for him:

Es inútil lamentarse
llorando lo que se mata;
en esta vida insensata
valdría más no quejarse.
Hay que nacer para dares.
Y tú te das al dolor (Méndez 1945, 5).

It also alludes to the Calderonian notion, at the heart of *El gran teatro del mundo*, which pivots on the inherent theatricality of life as: “es representación la vida humana/ una comedia sea/ la que hoy el cielo en tu teatro vea”

(Calderón 1980, 375, stanzas 46-8). In the *auto-sacramental* characters are guided to their destiny by an omnipotent force, as is the case in *Soledad* and *Amor*. This concept is evidenced in the play as Destino reveals aspects of Solitario's characters, that he himself is unable to access:

DESTINO.

Y tú te das el dolor
En este juego de amor.

SOLITARIO.

¿Trágico juego por cierto! (Méndez 1945, 5-6)

Solitario acknowledges here that he is part of a greater scheme or “juego”, and whilst its tragic nature can be seen, he is not at first able to take responsibility for the destructive role he has in Amor's death. Solitario's soliloquies reveal his existential conflict described as “angustia” in *Amor* (Méndez 1998, 25) and “alma angustiada” in *Soledad* (Méndez 1945, 32). Although *Soledad* has a tragic end shown in Amor's death, the play also celebrates Solitario's capacity for imagination and creativity. Although Solitario is partly responsible for Amor's death, it is as a consequence of her death that he is able to break with his melancholic nostalgia expressive of her loss. Throughout *Soledad* there is a perpetual return to the past and to the site of trauma, symbolised in the spectre of Amor on the stage:

SOLITARIO.

¡Nuevamente envuelta en grises
está mi melancolía;
y al amparo de estos muros
vuelve la existencia mía.

yo no sé qué frío traigo

de esta mi última jornada...

Apoyo pide mi frente,
apoyo mi alma angustiada.

Una noche más oscura
se alza ante mí, Me parece
que mis ojos se hacen niebla
y el mundo más se entristece.

¡Muros que me rodeáis,
testigos de mi infortunio,
ya veis cómo me encontráis! (Méndez 1945, 32)

In this passage Solitario appears to have awoken from his dream and is reincarnated as a tired and melancholy character: “Yo no sé qué frío traigo”. Visual imagery depicts him as enshrouded in grey, which represents his decision to remain with Soledad and retreat into his own loneliness rather than embrace Amor. The image used here depicts Solitario as being enshrouded in grey, “envuelta en grises”, and Soledad as a grey cloud that envelops him and therefore visualises his retreat into the grey “shadow” of himself. This equivalence of darkness with solitude is further developed in the repeated imagery, such as “noche” and “niebla”, which reinforces the sense of melancholy he describes here. Another repeated image is of the walls surrounding him, which he refers to at the beginning of the above quotation as “Amparos de estos muros”, and at end of the soliloquy: “muros que me rodeáis”. These walls both refer to the walls of the stage, but also to his reference to the audience as “testigos de mi infortunio”. The walls become a stage that externalise his internal memory, and the stage a representation of his inner conflict. His calls for strength are an appeal to the audience to assist him in this struggle with his mind: “Apoyo pide mi frente, / Apoyo mi alma angustiada”. The play is a staging of his “alma angustiada”, a representation

of his internal conflict. In *Soledad* and *Amor*, the stage represents the inner battle between love and solitude, taking place in the minds of the lead protagonists.

Solitario's breaking the fourth wall is depicted when he refers to the reader as "muros" and "testigos". This shows how Méndez forces the readers to take on a more active role in the play by directly addressing them as the witnesses of the action. It makes the audience active participants in his existential struggle, and in establishing this rapport with the audience they are implicated as witnesses to Amor's murder. Méndez deploys the Brechtian distancing effect, *Verfremdungseffekt*, through which Brecht made the familiar appear strange, so that the audience were unable to emotionally connect with the characters. The repeated references to Brecht throughout Méndez's memoirs and texts (Méndez 2001c) indicate that she was influenced by his work and consciously critically located her theatre with European authors and theories as well as within the Spanish canon. By including the reader in the play, Méndez pushes the audience to engage in an active critique of the play, whereby they "cannot escape the act of bearing witness" (Morgan 2013, 56-57). I choose this description of the reader as witness because it encapsulates the importance of the theatre as a space of self-reflexion, as opposed to Lionel Abel's term from 1963 which rooted the term more specifically into contemporary, primarily American, playwrights such as Arthur Miller (Chambers 2002, 492). The use of meta-theatre in relation to Méndez's plays refers to a tradition which has its roots in Spain's Golden Age theatre. Essential to Méndez's trilogy is Ruiz Ramón's summary of "metateatro" from the *Diccionario del teatro* as comprising of: "dos postulados básicos: el mundo como escenario y la vida como sueño" (Gómez García 1997, 547). In *Soledad* there is a continual impetus to return to the past, and re-enact the moment Solitario loses Amor. It is clear that the only way Solitario can break the chain of a relentless spectre of melancholia and nostalgia is by destroying Amor. He does this as an accomplice to Soledad, and Solitario therefore takes

on a greater sense of agency for his actions: “a ese amor he dado muerte. / Porque yo fui quien lo quiso...” (Méndez 1945, 5). Whilst both Solitario and Soledad are later deplored by the Madre for their violent brutality and lack of conscience, it is precisely the murder of Amor that frees him from a soporific existence, trapped inside his memory and nostalgia. From this perspective, the murder of Amor becomes an affirmative act that frees him from a repeated state of melancholia and loss, reinforcing that what Méndez presents in these plays is a complex representation of human nature as Solitario’s brutality is both negative and positive.

Jo Labanyi has written of the relationship between the appearances of ghosts in Spanish culture as making a symbolic reference to a haunting of national conscious (Labanyi 1998, 2). Referring to Freud and Derrida’s writing on the topic of melancholia and hauntology in Labanyi’s introduction to *Rescuing the Living Dead from the Dustbin of History* (1998), I will briefly include this as part of the discussion of the recurrence of ghosts in Méndez’s plays. In *Amor* it is clear that Soledad embodies a melancholic solitude born of living in the past, and Farero must choose between Soledad or Muchacha. This conflicted decision making process represents how the two oppositional forces of past and present, death and love, cannot cohabit. Likewise, in *Soledad* it is impossible for Amor and Soledad to exist in the same space. The evident haunting of the past, of spectres that would seem to call for Solitario to allow them to be what Derrida termed the “hospitable memory” (Labanyi 1998, 2), are violently murdered (Amor) and banished (Madre). Allowing the spectre of Amor to continue to exist in the present means that Solitario lives in a perpetual state of mourning, as Soledad’s murder of Amor liberates Solitario from this state of melancholia. This state draws a parallel with what Labanyi termed as a state of melancholia that becomes an unhealthy “living death” (Labanyi 1998, 1). Solitario is liberated because he has accepted the past, that Amor is dead, and now lives in the present with Soledad. The murder of Amor and banishment of Madre come from what is presented as a selfish desire for

Solitario to reclaim his imagination and inner life. Amor has both been allowed to leave a “trace” as she is conjured back on to the stage as a ghost by Recuerdo, but is also once again destroyed when she is murdered revealing that for Méndez, dealing with the past is full of paradoxes and unresolved oppositional forces of human nature.

Méndez’s inclusion of the Wilde quotation in the Introduction summarises the conflict between love and death that drives the plot. It is later echoed by Solitario who similarly states: “Y dominé al amor hasta matarlo, / Porque hice del amor mi único centro” (Méndez 1945, 2). Méndez’s contemporary poetic verse, is clearly embedded in the avant-garde tradition, and also incorporates many elements of the auto-sacramental. Valender also refers to Méndez’s use of poetry as a vital part of the collection: “[...] no cabe duda de que el marco principal en que *El solitario* busca insertarse es el del teatro y de la poesía del siglo XVII: Calderón de la Barca y (sobre todo en la tercera parte de la trilogía) Quevedo.” (Valender 1999, 418) This melding of genres is evidenced in Solitario’s use of language in his soliloquies:

!Ya ves qué contradicción,
qué monstrua locura.
Para mi vida futura
roto llevo el corazón.
lo rompí con mi razón
queriéndolo sin quererlo.
Nadie podrá comprenderlo,
ni lo comprendo yo mismo...
Si me atreví a este heroísmo,
Ya no podré deshacerlo! ... (Méndez 1945, 5)

Méndez’s rhyming couplets depict a series of contrasting images, made more apparent by the controlled rhyme scheme and metrics of the verse. In the first

couplets the repetition of the same line with the altered change of the final words from “locura” to “futura”, shows how Solitario’s supposed madness in killing Amor is also what leads him to a future liberated from his madness of nostalgia and melancholia. Through the couplets the logic of an action leading to a consequence is a repeated structure. In the second couplet, for instance, Solitario states that his heart was broken by his own reason. In the rhyming verse Méndez eloquently reveals the paradox of the statements by juxtaposing seemingly binary images and concepts, such as here of the sentimental “corazón” with “razón”. As the underlying “angustia” of his conflicted existence is revealed, Solitario states that he both did and did not want to be rid of Amor: “Queréndolo sin quererlo”.

Méndez skillfully uses paradoxical images in the rhyming couplets to create a dense poetic language through which to explore the existential questions of the text: “Nadie podrá comprenderlo, / Ni lo comprendo yo mismo...” (Méndez 1945, 5). This statement foregrounds human nature as conflict and living as a state of paradox. Solitario’s capacity to simultaneously love and destroy Amor renders any attempt at a simplistic interpretation of Solitario as “bad”, and Farero as “good”, as unviable. As evidenced by the death of the spectre of Amor in *Soledad*, it is this battle between love and death and companionship and solitude that makes the protagonists human. This conflict of “the self” was a topic of major debate during the turn of the twentieth century and avant-garde. Méndez’s plays depict a world where humanity is conflicted and in which there is no omnipotent guiding force. In *Soledad* she explores a similar question that is proposed by Nietzsche in *The Gay Science*, where he pronounced a Godless age: “God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers?” (Nietzsche 2010, kindle location 1442). If Amor is taken as representative of a divine omnipotent force, it is clear that her murder results in a lawless world of chaos. This adiamorphic state of humanity is embodied in Amor, who tells Solitario: “Lo que una vez se ha perdido, / no puede volver

a ser.../ (*Con tono débil*) / Aquí vuelvo, desmayada.” (Méndez 1945, 23). Solitario cannot go back to an ordered existence of love with Amor, because this has been irretrievably lost. Instead Méndez shows that he must become a “murderer” and destroy an already lost spectre to reinvent himself.

In *Amor* and *Soledad* there is a repeated return to the theme of the perishable and transitory nature of life, embodied in Farero / Solitario. The eternal and unchanging elements, such as destiny, time, love and light are constantly set against the transitory nature of humanity. María Zambrano describes this tension in the introduction to *Amor*:

Es entonces cuando escuchamos su voz más firme en su más hondo misterio: la desesperación de que este escenario sea borrado para dejar aparecer el negro hueco de la nada. Es la voz que interpela al tiempo mismo porque no se resigna a que el tiempo no sea también, salvado de su propia destrucción: “Qué nada hay tan insistente como tú, Tiempo suicida” (Zambrano 1998, 15)

The existential anguish of a post-lapsarian or post-Nietzschean struggle for life in the knowledge of death is constantly referred to by Solitario: “y donde quiera vaya mi mirada, / tan sólo polvo de cenizas veo...” (Méndez 1945, 2). María Zambrano describes this central struggle of the play in the following terms:

Este “misterio poético” de Concha está, sin duda, bajo la sombra y amparo de la más firme tradición de nuestro Teatro. Que su fuerza te aliente, Concha Méndez, para que sigas desenredando el laberinto de la vida, libertando a su monstruo, para llevarlo con la virginal gracia poética con que ahora lo has hecho, al “Gran Teatro del Mundo”. (Zambrano 1998, 15)

Her reflection on Méndez's theatre refers to a "misterio poético" (1998), and its depiction in the poetic imagination evidenced in "Historia de un teatro (1942)" (Méndez 2001c). This also ties in with repeated allusions to Calderón's *Gran Teatro del Mundo* and further delineates Méndez's amalgamation of thematic preoccupations from the *auto sacramental*, combined with poetic imagination and contemporary verse. The importance of the poetic verse in the play and its ability to most eloquently reveal this transitory nature of existence is conveyed in a soliloquy by Recuerdo in *Soledad*. Solitario's future, fated loneliness and continual existential wandering is visually represented as a boat on the sea. This image of a boat links to the symbolic landscape of the *Amor* version, where humanity represented in the character of Farero, is the lighthouse keeper surrounded by the sea:

RECUERDO.

No ignoras
que he venido para eso...
Aunque esté ausente yo vivo
para ser tu compañero.
Las horas que ausente paso
también contigo me encuentro,
que sé que mi compañía
es tu refugio más cierto.
Sin mí en la sombra estarías,
por no decirte que ciego.
Yo a tu corazón le pongo
las velas del sentimiento
y por tu mar va bogando
bien que sea a contraviento,
pero navega a sus fines

buscando siempre su puerto.
Timonel soy de esa nave
que tú llevas en tu pecho. (Méndez 1945, 36-7)

Recuerdo's soliloquy encapsulates the tragic nature of human existence in the imagery of Solitario as a restless shipwrecked boat constantly seeking a port. Recuerdo describes Solitario as the helmsman ("timonel") of this boat and in doing so further reveals how the stage represents Solitario's internal struggle. At the start of *Soledad*, Solitario begs Recuerdo, who symbolises his past, to stay with him and distract him from the lost Amor. Recuerdo allows Solitario the luxury of reliving this past nostalgic memory of the spectre of Amor through "las velas del sentimiento". However, as a consequence of this, Solitario lives a torturous existence, in which he is constantly haunted by the nostalgia of his past, reinforcing this depiction of Farero / Solitario as a transitory agent whose ephemerality is contrasted all the more against the enduring universal symbols of the sea and light.

In *Soledad* Méndez conveys a tragic depiction of humanity through Solitario choosing Soledad, as his inevitable retreat to solitude is evidenced. This tragedy is heightened through Amor's self-awareness, evidenced as her statement "nada valgo / Si un corazón no me abriga" reveals an understanding of the insignificance of allegorical value for Solitario and her inability to exist without his wanting her:

AMOR.
¡Qué aciago
el destino que me dieron...
Aunque Amor soy, nada valgo.
Si un corazón no me abriga,
en los hielos me deshago! (Méndez 1945, 24)

Amor's self-awareness also illustrates how themes of destiny and fate, play an important role in the unfolding of a plot that centres on an existential struggle. What is unveiled in *Soledad* is the story of Solitario following his own destiny, through his defiant yet affirmative murder of Amor. Similarly, Méndez's work written in exile, can also be characterised by the liberating and affirmative potential of writing. Rather than a melancholic response, Méndez's writing was an affirmative act, as described by Altolaguirre: "Con el tiempo fui comprendiendo cómo lo que le interesaba era subrayar, sobre todo, que a pesar del sufrimiento, ella había vivido como quiso vivir y que, por lo tanto, no cambiaría su destino por el de nadie" (Altolaguirre 1990, 18-9). By using past theatrical genres Méndez defiantly occupied a space of exile and focused on the transformational moment by combining the *auto-sacramental* with her contemporary poetic verse to create a new form of playwriting.

Before turning to a further analysis of the plays it is important to outline the centrality of gender, in relation to Méndez's earlier works written during Spain's avant-garde, and these plays written many decades later in Mexico. Her reflections of her earliest experience of being an audience member at the theatre are outlined in *Memorias* (Altolaguirre 1990). It is here that she describes an important moment of revelation whilst watching Ibsen's *A Doll's House*:

Fue una revelación; una doble revelación, ya que *Casa de Muñecas* me planteó aquello de emanciparse. He escrito varias obras de teatro: *El carbón y la rosa*, *El solitario* y otras; pero en ellas no hablo de emancipación, porque liberarme fue algo que me preocupaba en la vida. (Altolaguirre 1990, 47)

Méndez describes her experience of watching the play as integral to her decision to become a playwright: "Cuando sea mayor- les dije a mis padres-

escribiré teatro” (Altolaguirre 1990, 47). Méndez stated that in the plays she went on to write she had deliberately chosen not to explore the theme of emancipation, referencing *El carbón y la rosa* and *El solitario*: “pero en ellas no hablo de emancipación, porque liberarme fue algo me preocupaba en la vida” (Altolaguirre 1990, 47). She highlights a tension between the intentions of her authorial self, compared to her autobiographical “real” self, rendering her preoccupation with emancipation exclusively to her lived experience. This was contradicted in later years when Méndez would go on to conflate her playwriting as an integral aspect of her own process of emancipation as a female writer in a text entitled “Una visita a Elstree (1929)”. She describes here the possibility enabled through the process of writing, of being able to live a multitude of anonymous lives through her imagination:

Desde mi vida, he querido penetrar en esta multitud de vidas anónimas. Pero el ángel de los letreros luminosos ha descorrido la cortina de la noche y ha salido a mi encuentro. En su mano derecha, el más luminoso de los letreros que venía a decir: “Se prohíbe el paso”. (Méndez 2001c, 46)

By virtue of her writing Méndez was able to transgress the boundaries she had been confined to as a woman growing up in Spain in the early 1900s. She wrote the above statement in around 1929 while in the UK, following her solo Buenos Aires trip. In this quotation she describes the social obstacles she faced, given that the very act of writing indicated a transgression into a male dominated world. Méndez shows how her nonconformity was bound with her need to write in “Discurso pronunciado por la poeta Concha Méndez Cuesta para agradecer el homenaje (1930)”:

Éstos y otros sueños difíciles de contar me hacían levantar del lecho y gritar en el silencio de la noche, hasta que la intervención de algún criado o de algún familiar ponía punto final al sueño. Un día en mi

teatro yo daré una vida a esta serie de personajes que llevaba- que llevo- conmigo. (Méndez 2001c, 55-6)

A clear connection is established here between the transformational moment of her “doble revelación” and the way in which Méndez connects her playwriting to her own emancipation. By the end of this quotation Méndez suggests that one day in her theatre she would write these characters that she carried with her to “levantar del lecho y gritar en el silencio de la noche”. This reveals that in fact in later years Méndez did strive to embody, through her theatre and writing, a space of rebellion, and how this gendered space of existential struggle that also characterises *Amor* and *Soledad*. In both plays Méndez incorporates a more conventional depiction of a woman as termed by Mary Nash (1999), in the customary “angel of the house” (Johnson 2003, 225) embodied in the Muchacha. Important for the symbolism of Muchacha is that she comes from the sea and carries out a maternal role in the play, similar to Luz.

A parallel can be drawn between these characters and Unamuno’s symbolism of women as the sea: “la inmensa Humanidad silenciosa se levantan los que meten bulla en la Historia. Esa vida intra-histórica, silenciosa, y continua como el fondo mismo del mar, es la sustancia del progreso, la verdadera tradición, la tradición eternal” (Johnson 2003, 33). Méndez also appropriates this image and then she presents the radical inversion of this mythological ancient maternal symbol of woman as history and nation, through Soledad, who destroys these symbols. Soledad is the subversive Eve-like character, who, in *Amor* is presented as a one-dimensional dangerous character, but in *Soledad* is more ambiguously characterised. Méndez incorporates the conventional depictions of women as maternal figures, but in *Soledad*, Amor is poisoned and Madre had died. The characterisation of Soledad, murderess and temptress, is reminiscent of the Film Noir femme fatale of the 1940s. Méndez’s interest in film is particularly

evidenced in her writing film scripts, as described by Pérez de Ayala, in fact Méndez's transition to theatre directly followed her writing as a cineaste, evidenced in "una base cinematográfica evidente" (Pérez de Ayala 1999, 128) in her plays. In *Amor* and *Soledad* for instance, the characterisations of Soledad are very visual, with many references made to the colour associated with her, grey, and her movement on stage.

Méndez chose an explicitly public genre of writing for the theatre. Given that Méndez was prohibited to read even fiction in her childhood, her decision to write for the theatre makes an explicitly gender motivated public provocation of her imaginative capability. She flouts the prevalent belief in Madrid during the early 1900s, that a woman's place is naturally confined to the enclosed private and domestic sphere. Bernard describes Méndez's break with conventional spaces as forcefully imposing herself in the public space:

La conquista de la calle como lugar donde pasear libremente y sin control, entrando en contacto con diversas manifestaciones de la vida, fue importante para estas artistas que en sus obras - las pinturas de Mallo y los poemas de Méndez- representarían espacios abiertos, públicos, no domésticos, en los que se puede proyectar la nueva identidad de mujer libre y no sometida, encarnada por ellas mismas. (Bernard 2011, 16)

This breaking of boundaries and spaces in Madrid's avant-garde is continued during her exile in Mexico, and whilst being many decades later in a different continent, she was also publically transgressive as a divorced woman. Her social isolation was centrally influenced by the negative connotations of her status as a woman. Leggott outlines this:

Méndez did not regularly participate in the *tertulias* or other gatherings associated with the literary establishment in Mexico,

indicating a certain community in terms of her experience as a woman writer, always on the periphery in the cultural scene. Méndez's positioning in this regard in Mexico may be attributable, not only to her geopolitical exile, but also to the fact that by this time she was no longer the wife of Altolaguirre and had ceased to collaborate with him on literary ventures. Méndez thus no longer enjoyed the status that her former public identity as "wife of" a recognized literary figure inherited. (Leggott 2008, 140)

Méndez's "doble revelación" (Altolaguirre 1990, 47) is connected with art and society, and this reinforces the important link between Méndez's quest for emancipation both as a woman living within the restrictions of the early 1900s and radically breaking with these expectations. On the one hand this emancipation is evidenced through her travels to Buenos Aires and Europe, and on the other, in her autodidactic self-conscious invention of herself as an author writing across multiple genres during Spain's avant-garde. Méndez's break with the limitations of her position as a woman in Spain in the early twentieth century, and her life-long quest for emancipation are therefore inextricably bound to her subversion of artistic conventions and forms as a writer. Méndez simultaneously engaged with the specific cultural, intellectual and artistic context from which her writing emerged, whilst also seeking to write outside this context.

Méndez self-consciously occupied a marginal space given that she continued to publish her work which as a female author was socially and ideologically unacceptable in Spain during the Franco dictatorship. Her "doble realización" is therefore a double act of subversion, in her quest for emancipation in her life, especially evident in her travels and education, and artistically as an author. As depicted in *Memorias* Méndez was "allowed" into the male dominated artistic milieu of Madrid's avant-garde as a consequence

of her relationships with key members of this group, first through her fiancé Luis Buñuel (Bernard 2011, 14-6). This subsequently led to friendships with Lorca and Alberti, and her marriage to Manuel Altolaguirre, and their important working relationship which led to the foundation of the printing press La Verónica, and the publication of a number of literary magazines. The magazines and printing press, identified by Méndez also in *Memorias*, played a crucial role in the formation of Madrid's literary avant-garde:

Y estoy segura que, para que el grupo de amigos llegara a formarse como generación del 27, fue fundamental el trabajo editorial que Altolaguirre empezó con Emilio Prados y la revista *Litoral*, y que después continuó conmigo. Sin aquellas publicaciones (*Poesía*, *Héroe*, *1616*, *Caballo verde para la poesía*, más todas las colecciones poéticas que editamos), no se hubiese podido crear una unidad de grupo. (Altolaguirre 1990, 92)

Whilst Méndez played a central role in working and founding the printing press with Altolaguirre, she had remained on the margins because she was a woman. Although she was on the margins, unlike in exile in Mexico, she did nevertheless carry out an important role as part of this group. This is evidenced by the fact that she had already physically entered this space as a labourer of the printing press dressed in her “mono azul” (Leggott 2008, 128-9) as well as artistically and intellectually as she began to write poetry (in conversation with Alberti and Lorca as documented in *Memorias* (Altolaguirre 1990, 47-50), alongside her film scripts and plays. Although Méndez occupied an unusual position for a woman of her time being immersed in the avant-garde through her association with key members of the prestigious intellectual and artistic group, she was an outsider and occupied a space of marginality. Méndez's friendships with writers such as Lorca, Alberti and Cernuda (Altolaguirre 1990, 87), to name a few, and her relationships firstly with Buñuel and latterly in her marriage to Altolaguirre afforded her an unusual

access to *La Residencia de Estudiantes* and to this group which was unprecedented for a woman at this time. Yet as discussed by Leggott: “Despite this, Méndez’s position in relation to this group is marginal and peripheral” (Leggott 2008, 118). The peripheral position of Méndez has also been reflected at a scholarly level in her exclusion from the canon as described by Leggott and Bellver:

After the war, Méndez fell into oblivion and disappeared from most literary records in Spain. While many writers of her generation, male and female, found themselves in a similar situation, the effect of exile on male poets was less severe; as Bellver notes, “[w]hile most men were eventually reintegrated into the literary consciousness, women poets were virtually obliterated”. (Leggott 2008, 120)

From this perspective Concha Méndez occupies a self-conscious space of the centre margin. Méndez was simultaneously at the centre as is shown through her affiliation with Madrid’s male dominated intellectual and artistic elite, yet she was also at its margin because of being a woman. Méndez perpetuates her lived experience of occupying this peripheral space in her plays, with a plot that focuses on a character who struggles with the margins. The struggle enacted in the two versions of *Amor* and *Soledad* is also a dramatization of Méndez’s battle with her imagination and struggle to create. The following close reading of *Amor* and *Soledad* will focus on three core themes: Duelo and Sombra; Psychology and Dreams; Gender.

The repeated use of the symbol of the shadow (*sombra*) in *Amor* and *Soledad*, is closely connected to loss and mourning (*duelo*). The reference to shadows is especially prevalent in *Soledad*, and is also an image deployed across the other genres of her writing, particularly in her poetry and autobiographical prose. The connotations of shadows in Méndez’s poetry have

been most extensively discussed by Leggott (2008) and Wilcox (1997) and primarily in relation to two collections: *Niño y sombras* (1936); *Sombras y sueños* (1944). Reference to some events from Méndez's life are relevant to include here, given that the publication dates of these collections, with their thematic focus on loss and melancholy, coincide with a number of bereavements suffered by Méndez. For instance, *Niño y sombras* (1936) is Méndez's elegiac response to the trauma of miscarriage in 1933 (Sánchez Martin 2006, 891). Meanwhile, *Sombras y sueños* (1944) was written in Mexico following the death of Méndez's mother and after her separation from Manuel Altolaguirre. Valender describes the effect of these events on her writing of the third part of the trilogy, *Soledad*, also written in 1944: "en ella también se aprecia una reflexión muy amarga y desengañada sobre las relaciones humanas" (Valender 2001a, 52). These events had a role to play in both collections' thematic focus on loss and melancholy. This was depicted in the focus of her poetry collections, deploying the symbol of the shadow. It also appears in her autobiographical *Memorias* (Altolaguirre 1990), given that her testimonial account is a "shadowing" of her past. The repeated motif of the shadow in her poetry and autobiographical prose reveal the intertextual significance of the shadow across her writing and the overlap with her lived experienced.

Central to the plot of *Amor* and *Soledad* is humanity's (Farero / Solitario) inner conflict in choosing between Solitude / Death, depicted as a shadow (Soledad), and Love (Luz / Madre and Muchacha / Amor). This is clear in the last scene of *Soledad* where Solitario describes his destiny as that of living in the shadows with Soledad (Méndez 1945, 40-41). Likewise, in *Amor* he describes himself as a shadow amongst shadows: "[...] sombra entre sombras, sombra de fantasma!" (Méndez 1998, 34). The depiction of the shadow (Soledad) haunting Farero / Solitario is, as in the case of Méndez's poetry, connected to loss and melancholy. It reveals the self-conscious space of these plays, which enact Soletario's decision to become a spectator of his

life, through his isolation with Soledad. The significance of the shadow (Soledad) is integrally connected to Méndez's artistic response to bereavement. The shadow is a more complex symbol because it does not have exclusively melancholic or negative associations. Instead it serves the purpose of an artistic response by Méndez to loss, which has implications for her representation of the human condition as inherently conflicted. This positive connection between the shadow, depicting the darker side of humanity, is also connected to the positive affiliations of creativity. In this sense, her depiction of the shadow may compare to Jung's theorisation that the unknown part of the psyche, what he termed to be the shadow self, "contains something more than something merely negative" (Jung 2014, kindle location 1106). As with the shadow in *Soledad*, Solitario's choosing solitude brings with it a positive transformative ability of casting off his melancholic nostalgia for the past.

The first scene of *Soledad* opens with a monologue from Solitario in which he laments his loss of Amor. In order to appease his nostalgia he calls on *Recuerdo* to bring Amor back to him, so that he might relive the happy memory of when they were still together:

SOLITARIO.

(Con voz angustiada)

Recuerdo, ven a mi memoria,
ven a este sueño que me anima,
tráeme la voz que ya he perdido,
tráeme el color que me redima,
tráeme la luz de su mirada,
trae del amor su tibio clima;
que en este gris estoy ahogado.
Quiero salir a antigua cima
a ver los soles de mi mundo
donde la luz no se escatima. (Méndez 1945, 8)

Solitario describes his nostalgic desire to return to the past and relive a happy love he had previously enjoyed, but which he has already lost. The passage centres on the image of Solitario being drowned in grey. This repeated motif is deployed to show how he has succumbed to Soledad, in an attempt to be saved from his solitude he calls for light, colour and the sun to return to him, making reference to Luz from *Amor*, and the imagery of light and colour associated with love. Solitario is only able to return to his past through his memory, and to relive a bygone happiness by *Recuerdo* conjuring the ghost of Amor. The images of shadows and loss are used as dramatic devices in this passage. They cast him in the role of a spectator of his past love, and the play is enacted through the terrain of his memory. However, Amor exposes the artifice of this re-enactment of a bygone memory and Solitario's nostalgic desire to return to a past that had already been destroyed, stating: "AMOR. Soy un fantasma / una sombra no más, cosa fingida" (Méndez 1945, 17), showing her awareness of being a ghostly "sombra" and rejecting Solitario and *Recuerdo*'s nostalgic and melancholic reconstruction of the past. Nevertheless, she is unable to force Solitario to realise she is a spectre. She is impotent until she is poisoned by Soledad, at which point Solitario is freed from his memory of their past. This focus on Solitario's nostalgic past and on loss has a clear crossover with Méndez's losses in 1944.

In Persin's article on the relationship between exile, memory and loss in Méndez's poetry, she further develops the concept of *duelo*:

El patrón que propongo en este estudio sobre esta dirección nueva en la producción poética de Méndez es el del duelo, que contiene en sí dos aspectos distintos: primero, uno que mira hacia el pasado con nostalgia y hasta con melancolía por medio de la memoria; y segundo, el elegíaco, por el que la poeta

intenta integrar su experiencia para así poder seguir viviendo en un mundo lleno de recuerdos de lo perdido. (Persin 2009, 81)

Persin's depiction of *duelo* in Méndez's poetry can also be related to Méndez's trilogy, and the characterisation of Soledad, embodying the poetic imagination and affirmative act of destruction as a necessary aspect of an imaginative regeneration. Méndez's plays are inevitably distinct from her poetry, given the intention for performance underlying the play text. Wilcox depicts an existential tension essential to Méndez's poetry in the following terms:

En la poesía de destierro de Concha Méndez, más que la borrosa presencia de la patria perdida, se destaca la sombra en el sentido de oscuridad existencial, la sombra como estado de ánimo que abarca la incertidumbre, ambigüedad y desesperanza anuladoras del deseo de vivir. (Persin 2009, 81)

This "borrosa presencia" is also an essential motif of the trilogy and of Farero / Solitario's existential struggle between love and solitude / death. Persin defines *duelo* as consisting of two key parts: firstly, of being a nostalgic look towards the past, with a melancholic memory. Secondly, as an elegiac form through which Méndez integrates her experience in order to continue living in a world that is haunted by memories of things or people that she has lost. The significance of this concept of *duelo* and the negotiation of the imagery of shadows is central to an analysis of representations of loss and exile in *Soledad*.

In *Soledad*, the plot dramatizes a restaging of loss by re-conjuring the spectre of Amor and Solitario's nostalgic desire to live in the past. By the end of the play, Solitario is forced to confront the reality of his lost love and unable therefore to perpetuate the artifice of memory in his mind's eye. For

the first half of the play, Solitario is represented as a character who opts to live in a liminal state of perpetual mourning: “Que vive en eterno duelo / el hombre, es bien sabido; / y anda como enloquecido” (Méndez 1945, 7). He is depicted as living a form of madness as a consequence of his melancholic fantasy to return to his nostalgic memory of a lost past. The use of the term *duelo* is an important intertextual device, also deployed in Méndez’s poetry collections (Méndez 1935; 1944). Méndez dramatizes a melancholic response to loss, which culminates in Solitario’s madness: “anda como enloquecido” (Méndez 1945, 7). Solitario’s struggle to relinquish the past represents a mediation on loss, and also has an overlap with Méndez’s bereavements at this time. Whilst the plot of *Soledad* reflects on the madness induced by this nostalgic retreat into a lost past, in the poisoning of Amor, the melancholic past is transformed into an affirmative present. This destructive act of violence is also empowering because it enables Solitario to reclaim his internal creative life from the downward spiral of nostalgia and melancholia represented in his memories. Whilst Solitario has lost Amor, he gains Soledad. In *Soledad* she symbolises the destructive force of the imagination. *Soledad* reveals a rejection of conventional domestic depictions of happiness, represented in *Amor* through marriage. Solitario’s return to Soledad can also be interpreted as a representation of the imagination of the artist, who embraces solitude in order to reaffirm their poetic creativity and imagination.

In *Soledad* the image of the shadow, characterised in Soledad, is closely connected to mourning (*duelo*). In her Introduction to *Amor*, Zambrano also refers to *duelo* to describe the existential conflict, depicted as a vital characteristic of lyrical poetry (Zambrano 1998, 11). Zambrano describes the capacity of lyric poetry to explore this conflict through an aesthetic veneer of coherence that is impossible in life itself. She describes Méndez’s theatre as “dramatic poetry”, able to articulate this internal conflict. Zambrano suggests that poetry can best explore these existential and psychological questions, able to provide a coherent framework which can be examined through verse.

Theatre then, or as she terms it “poesía dramática”, is the corporeal embodiment of these questions:

De ahí, el teatro, la poesía dramática que presta cuerpo y palabra, realidad corpórea a las voces que sólo suenan dentro de nosotros; a las que nos hablan dentro y fuera en nuestra soledad. La poesía dramática que fija y aclara en su terrible misterio, el laberinto de nuestra vida, que descifra el enigma de nuestra soledad sin reposo, porque no es completa soledad. Porque somos uno, estamos solos, en el más secreto rincón de nuestro olvido, y al acordarnos, al salir a la faz del mundo nuestra unidad se quiebra y enmaraña y la soledad se hace imposible. Nos encontramos con la sorpresa de que no somos uno, sino muchos, que luchan y se desmienten. (Zambrano 1998, 11-2)

Zambrano depicts the unique potentiality of theatre combined with poetry to embody this human conflict between love and solitude. In *Amor* and *Soledad* we are presented with two different outcomes of this internal battle. Zambrano’s description of Méndez’s “acendrada pureza” suggests that the complexities of Méndez’s plays. She describes Méndez’s “mirada inocente y cargada de asombro”, referring to how this trilogy incorporates conflicting oppositional desires for love and solitude, embodied in *Soledad* and *Farero / Solitario*. This is seen in *Solitario*’s monologue where he describes the conflict between “mi sombra y mi luz” as the source of his *duelo*:

SOLITARIO.

Entre mi sombra y mi luz,
estoy en continuo duelo.
Y se irá mi juventud
sin encontrar un consuelo
para mi doble inquietud.

Yo fui como mar en lucha
por salirse de su centro,
y a una tierra dura y fría
vine a dar con mi elemento. (Méndez 1945, 35)

Solitario's conflict is visually depicted as a battle between a shadow (*Soledad*) and light (*Madre / Luz & Muchacha / Amor*), which he depicts as creating an anxious "doble inquietud". What Méndez explores through the two versions of the play are the two enactments of their choices shown in the prevalence of light and love in *Amor* and of shadows and solitude, in *Soledad*. *Duelo* refers to the existential anxiety of realising that identity is not a coherent entity, rather, it is conflicting and multiple. The internal conflict hidden inside of each individual is described later on in *Soledad* as a turbulent sea. Whilst this conflict finds different resolutions in the endings of *Amor* and *Soledad*, *duelo* is an essential term which depicts the conflicted human condition and shows how the affirmative transformation is closely connected to loss.

In an interview with Méndez in Buenos Aires in 1930 during her trip to Argentina, entitled "Concha Méndez Cuesta, Poetisa Española, publica un libro en Buenos Aires" she stated that:

El teatro necesita de una renovación, es decir, de una creación nueva, y sólo los poetas debemos soñar con esto; no para hacer un teatro en verso, que lo hicieron los clásicos, además de que el ritmo del verso moderno no se presta para tal empresa, sino un teatro en prosa, lírica o no lírica, pero creado por imaginación de poeta. (Méndez 2001c, 51)

It is clear that *Soledad* embodies her earlier ideas outlined here on the theatre. Méndez depicts the need to break with the existing conventions of theatre, in

order to create a new form of theatre. She foregrounds her belief that theatre can be written only from the poetic imagination, and she charges the poet with the task of renovating the theatre. This renovation of theatre seems to stem from concepts of the theatre prevalent across Europe during the avant-garde years, described in Brecht's statement that: "será necesario modificar el teatro hasta el punto de la denominación actual de "teatro" apenas conserve su validez" (Millán 2009, 20). There was of course another call from Spain; Lorca's *El público* written between 1929-30, though posthumously published, also drew on the classics of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and Spanish Golden Age traditions in a "difícilísimo juego poético en espera de que el amor rompiera con ímpetu y diera nueva forma a los trajes" (Millán 2009, 34). In this complex play Lorca probed the theater's search for reality, as the director is confronted by society and the theatre audience. Méndez also incorporates the classics in her play, incorporating Golden Age theatre motifs with contemporary poetry. She distinguishes here between the tradition of this classic "teatro en verso", and the contemporary "ritmo del verso moderno" to propose a new form of theatre that would be "un teatro en prosa, lírica o no lírica, pero creado por imaginación de poeta". What Méndez radically questions here is her theatrical inheritance of Golden Age theatre, shown later on in the essay where she claims: "Para mí no es sino literatura con pretensiones de espectáculo" (Méndez 2001c, 52). Relating this to *Soledad*, the image of Soledad merging with Solitario at the end of the play, embodies a dramatic staging of this poetic imagination. In the blending of elements of the *auto-sacramental* genre and modern verses, Méndez reveals the intrinsic struggle between "teatro en verso" and "ritmo del verso moderno". *Soledad*, and indeed the trilogy as a whole, not only deals with humanity's internal conflict, but at a meta-theatrical level, it is also an enactment of her conception of the liberation of the "poet's imagination" a liberation that can only be achieved through destruction. Méndez embodies this concept in the struggle between Soledad and Amor, and Solitario's liberation at the end of *Soledad* from his mourning of his past. Soledad becomes an allegorical

symbol of creativity and agency in the face of a traumatic past that also resonates with Méndez's life and work following her move to Mexico in 1944.

Whilst *El solitario* as a trilogy can be explored from the perspective of analysing memory and loss, Amor's murder in *Soledad* culminates in Solitario's reclaiming of his past. Overall then, *Soledad* reveals how Méndez's play reconfigures motifs of shadows and mourning typically associated with nostalgia and melancholia, in an experimental and subversive way. Méndez incorporates *duelo* but, as is made apparent by the end of *Soledad*, it is affiliated with a reclaiming of creativity as opposed to a return to melancholy. Although Persin noted that in Méndez's poetry *duelo*: "Tiene que ver con la pérdida de sí misma y del contexto en que vivió durante la juventud, y la muerte de posibilidades para el futuro" (Persin 2009, 84), conversely, her plays *Amor* and *Soledad* show a primarily affirmative destruction of her past in favour of solitude and creativity.

Méndez makes several references in *Memorias* to the significance of dreams and the unconscious in her writing, stating that: "A mí me ha gustado estudiar el inconsciente" (Altolaquirre 1990, 144). In this same passage she describes a cousin giving her Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899) (Freud 1987) and reflects that: "Después seguí leyendo varios libros sobre el inconsciente, porque me interesaba y con ellos podía comprender mejor a las gentes" (Altolaquirre 1990, 145). Her fascination with dreams and especially with their relationship to the unconscious is especially relevant to the *El solitario* trilogy, primarily given that the unconscious powers of imagination are embodied in the character of Soledad. Both *Amor* and *Soledad* stage an externalisation of the internal conflict between Farero / Solitario and with Amor / Luz, love / companionship and death / solitude. Méndez's reference here to these books on psychology, and her interest in how they might better equip her to explore the human psyche as a writer, is evidenced in her focus on the internal landscape of the mind represented in her plays. Dreams also

have an autobiographical importance for Méndez because they are central to enabling her to break subversively with imposed social structures. There is a clear genealogy between Méndez's impetus to write and emancipation as it is repeatedly depicted as methods for escaping the confines imposed upon her by her gender, shown as she states: "Los sueños de mi infancia –los que empecé a escribir, barajando los mapas de la escuela en el silencio de la noche, los sueños de barcos y mundos– empezaron a despertar" (Altolaquirre 1990, 62). This quotation depicts the importance of dreams in Méndez's life, acting as catalysts for her writing and decision to travel. In *Memorias* Méndez further described her interest in the interconnected nature of the unconscious and conscious life:

Es que hay una relación estrecha entre el sueño y la vigilia;
parecía que son dos mundos distintos y, sin embargo, están en
completa comunicación. [...] . Al soñar, no dejamos de vivir; en
el sueño llevamos una vida enteramente surrealista.
(Altolaquirre 1990, 42)

Likewise, in *Soledad* the play ends with Solitario's retreat to his imagination, and as a consequence he lives in a dream-like state of solitude with Soledad.

In "Historia de un teatro (1942)" Méndez also refers back to the motif of dreams and the unconscious, directly related to *El solitario* trilogy:

Para comprender la psicología de los pueblos no hay como
entrar en su producción teatral; en ella está viva su alma,
hablándonos por boca de sus personajes y de los hechos de los
mismos. En el mundo que mueve nuestro Calderón de la Barca,
en sus autos sacramentales y en *La vida es sueño*- hallazgo de
título como ni vi igual-, está la esencia más profunda del alma
de España. Su obra es el símbolo de lo español. De la

representación y lectura de sus obras, yo he salido como de un baño de luz. Para mí la vida es sueño y también soledad, tema esencialmente español y por lo tanto universal, porque los pueblos en su esencia se confunden y se complementan. El solitario de mi obra nace aislado en una torre de tierra adentro, un campanario abandonado, y lo acompañan de por vida desde su iniciación: las Horas, sus hermanas; el Tiempo, su padre; la Luz, su madre; y la yedra y un rosal, que entran por la ventana para asistir al acontecimiento de su venida al mundo. Llegada a su segunda etapa, o sea su juventud, en otra torre, en el mar, su compañía son: las Estaciones, sus amigas; su Destino; y personajes como su Pasado y su breve amor, que le ayudó a buscar su propia luz, o sea su propia madre. Pero, como dijo Oscar Wilde, “siempre matamos lo que más queremos”. El hombre matará a su amor e irá en busca de la soledad. Ésta es la tercera y última etapa del proceso teatral que compone el tríptico. Este tema de la soledad tiene, como ya dije, una raíz antigua, como puede verse a través de nuestra literatura. Todo español es un eterno solitario, por eso le es tan difícil la convivencia. (Méndez 2001c, 73-4)

Méndez makes direct reference here to the important role an analysis of theatre can have for understanding “el pueblo”. She depicts an essentialist idea of Spanish solitude as “todo español es un eterno solitario”, embodied in the character Solitario, and makes reference to the concept of Spanish national identity as the “individualismo español”³. Solitario embodies the extended idea of the solitary Spaniard cultivated by intellectuals such as Ortega y

³ For a succinct overview of this enduring myth, see historian José Álvarez Junco's recent article in *El País*: http://elpais.com/elpais/2015/01/02/opinion/1420204804_511764.html. For more in-depth discussion on this topic see: José Álvarez Junco, *Mater Dolorosa: La idea de España en el Siglo XIX* (Madrid: Grupo Santillana de Ediciones, S.A, 2001).

Gasset in his *España invertebrada* (1957), who depicted this emblematic Spanish individualism as one explanation for the loss of its colonies in 1898. Méndez describes how the characters of the play represent Farero's family and she links Farero's move to solitude to construct an allegory through these symbolic characteristics of an "individualismo español". She also depicts this as "raíz Antigua", portraying a central aspect of Spanish ideology in which: "Todo español es un eterno solitario, por eso le es tan difícil la convivencia." This depicts how the existential crisis of Farero / Solitario and his loss of Amor in *Soledad* can also be read as allegorical of Spain as a nation fulfilling an inevitable fate of tragic decadence. Of special relevance in an analysis of the trilogy as a whole is the depiction of the interconnectedness of the individual and collective narratives. Méndez uses this individual narrative of Farero / Solitario and his existential struggles also to represent the universal narrative of humanity. Méndez also evokes Calderón, suggesting that, *La vida es sueño*, is at the heart of the psychology of the Spanish nation: "está la esencia más profunda de la alma de España. Su obra es el símbolo de lo español". She outlines the significance of dreams specifically in relation to her own ideology of Spain, describing two key concepts of the existential struggle: "Para mí la vida es sueño y también soledad, tema esencialmente español y por lo tanto universal, porque los pueblos en su esencia se confunden y se complementan". These two different entities link to the chronology of Méndez's writing, given that her earlier play, *El personaje presentido* was very much based on what she described in "Historia de un Teatro (1942)" as "un intento de teatro psicológico" (Méndez 2001c, 73). *El solitario* trilogy with its addition of the *auto-sacramental* genre incorporates the central notion of solitude, and also aspects of the "teatro psicológico" genre, revolving as it does around an existential crisis being carried out in a primarily psychological terrain. In Méndez's description of the key themes and characters of *Amor*, she highlights the psychological plane of her theatre: "El solitario de mi obra nace aislado en una torre de tierra adentro" (Méndez 2001c, 73). This clearly positions the landscape of the play within the

psychological terrain of the “tierra adentro”, and returning to the concept of the plays staging the mind of Solitario and Farero.

In both *Amor* and *Soledad* the motif of dreams and the unconscious are central to the plot. In *Soledad*, a connection is established between dreams and death, when Amor is poisoned by Soledad. Méndez makes explicit reference to Calderón’s concept of life as dream from *La vida es sueño*:

ANGEL 2.

Que está soñando parece.

SOLEDAD.

¿Qué es la muerte si no un sueño?

ANGEL 1.

Un sueño que no se acaba

porque es el más verdadero. (Méndez 1945, 29-30)

This concept of death as “más verdadero” than life has many genealogies in Golden Age Spanish theatre, notably and also in Cervantes’ *La Galatea*: “Es nuestra vida un sueño, un pasatiempo / un vano encanto, que desaparece / quando más firme pareció en su tiempo” (Isasi Angulo 1980, 200). In *Soledad* what is depicted is not only the idea of life as dream, but another important Calderonian concept of *El gran teatro del mundo* that: “es representación la humana vida / una comedia sea / la que hoy el cielo en tu teatro vea.” (Calderón 1980, 375, stanzas 46-8). Another depiction of dream worlds is visually symbolised through the sea, as already noted, an image used throughout both *Amor* and *Soledad*. In *Amor*, this is seen as the Muchacha is partly depicted as the mythological creature of a mermaid. Whilst, the storm and shipwreck becomes a theatrical reflection of Farero’s own internal state of turmoil, the sea symbolizes the ambiguous space of dreams: “En el naufragio

de un sueño” (Méndez 1945, 35). Likewise, in Méndez’s poetry, the sea has previously been connected to an autobiographical symbol of unrealized potential:

El elemento marino trasciende la indudable motivación biográfica y se vuelve una pantalla simbólica sobre la que proyectar unas posibilidades de realización todavía indeterminadas. Estos primeros textos me parecen la manifestación del deseo de poder elegir activamente un destino en un espacio ideal imaginario, asociado, más que con panoramas urbanos, con geografías marítimas y a veces nórdicas. (Bernard 2012, 53)

In *El solitario* the sea also represents this landscape of imagination and the close connection this has with dreams.

In *Soledad* the internalised space of the unconscious dream world overcomes Solitario, as he retreats entirely to solitude. Solitario’s reflection on this permanent loss of love and all that she subsequently represents, can be found in his final soliloquy of the play:

SOLITARIO.

¿Razón tiene, no hay descanso,
pese a que se esté dormido,
que el sueño nos sale al paso
para agrandar los sentidos,
para llevarnos, en vuelo,
a mundos desconocidos
donde nada nos extraña,
aun cuando uno de uno mismo
se sale para ser otro

a quien nunca conocimos
mas tenemos la conciencia
de que en su cuerpo vivimos.
Y en ese desdoblamiento
tampoco es que nos fingimos.

Cuando me miro a mi fondo,
siento que multiplico,
que conmigo van más seres
a veces muy escondidos... (Méndez 1945, 38)

Solitario describes his restless internal state of being comprised of multiple selves, and where, having now chosen solitude, he has retreated permanently to this unconscious dream world. Through these dreams Solitario describes the “mundos desconocidos [...] donde nada nos extraña” and his retreat to the unconscious realm as a liberation from his conflicted waking state. His reflection on now only existing in this unconscious landscape of dream worlds, ultimately becomes a discussion of identity, as he states that: “Siento que multiplico, / que conmigo van más seres / a veces muy escondidos...”. This shows the centrality of Méndez’s own comments on her “doble revelación” and how through her plays she was able to live out multiple lives. This also connects back to the liberating potential of a retreat into the imagination, returning to the central preoccupation of the play of humanity’s conflicted existence.

Amor is set in a lighthouse; a building inherently charged with the social and ethical responsibility of guiding boats out of harm’s way. The lighthouse embodies the task of leading others, and if it fails to do so leads them to ruin. The function of Méndez’s choice of mise-en-scène for the play is an important repeated motif of Méndez’s allegorical landscape. The lighthouse is representative of the mind of Farero, of his detached and isolated

internal state, which is visualised as a tower surrounded by the sea. In *Amor*, the lighthouse symbolizes the Farero's social and ethical responsibilities, and the tragic consequences of his retreat to the internal space of his mind. In *Soledad* this is seen as the fact that Farero retreats into his dream world, the boat with Muchacha on board crashes. The storm represents the conflict of conscience in the struggle between love and death, and Farero's indecision around whether to rescue the boat is apparent. The external landscape enacts a retreat into his interior conflict. Symbolising the play as a representation of Farero's internal conflict is further represented through the lighting used on stage which has one side lit in green and the other in red. The complementary colours, red and green, visually symbolise the conflict between oppositional forces:

ESCENA: Interior de un faro.- Habitación semicircular. – De frente, grandes ventanales apaisados por donde se divisa el mar. – Discos salvavidas en las paredes.- Un farol marino de luz roja sobre una mesa; otro, de luz verde, pendiente del muro. – Mapas. – Un gran calendario hacia la izda, por donde podrán salir los personajes. – Un diván para el reposo y una ancha escalera de caracol que comunique con las partes alta y baja del faro.
Es de noche.- En escena, el Farero, casi adolescente, vestido de oscuro, como de marinero. – Luz general azulada. (Méndez 1998, 19)

The fact that the Lighthouse keeper is described as being almost an adolescent indicates this conflict is part of the shared bildungsroman narrative of moving into adulthood. The conflict he struggles with throughout the play of having to choose between Soledad and Amor shows that as he grows older the consequences of his choices affect the other characters. The question of freewill is also a conflicted concept for this play, given that Farero's decision

to marry Muchacha is influenced by the guiding light of his mother, Luz who when the storm breaks out lights the way to steer Muchacha's boat back to safety. His decision to save Muchacha, instead of retreating with Soledad, is a consequence of his mother. In this version, there is a more positive representation of carrying out actions of social responsibility as Farero chooses company instead of solitude. This decision represents a conflict for Farero who describes being born in a state of solitude:

FARERO.

Torrero, farero soy
yo que campanero fui;
la soledad preferí
y a mi soledad me doy.
En marina torre estoy
yo que nací en otra torre. (Méndez 1945, 19)

Identity as a state of conflict is indicated in Farero's description of himself as the keeper of the tower being both a "torrero"⁴ and "farero". Farero's transition from one tower to another, the bell tower (campanero) to the lighthouse (torre), indicates a repeated reference to towers as symbolic of the internal struggle of humanity dramatized in the play. These towers represent the solitary propensity of humanity to enclose themselves in solitude, depicted here by Farero's having been born inside a tower. This symbol of the tower reinforces the reference to Calderón and specifically to *La vida es sueño*, given that Segismundo is also trapped in a tower and battling with making a distinction between reality and dream. It is also fundamentally a reflection on the ephemeral and temporary nature of humanity's existence, one of the recurring motif from Méndez's poetry of the "borrosa presencia" (Persin

⁴ "Torrero" appears in the 1998 edition, however "torero" would also make sense in the context of the quotation. The original publication would need to be checked from Méndez's archive at the Residencia de Estudiantes in Madrid.

2009, 81). A preoccupation with the ephemeral nature of life is also shown in Farero's opening soliloquy to *Amor*:

A mi lado el tiempo corre
al compás de las estrellas,
y aquí, mirándome en ellas
temo que el ser se me borre. (Méndez 1945, 19)

This quotation reveals again that the plot of the trilogy centres on an examination of the human condition, between love and solitude. The sea is an important repeated symbol for both versions of the play. The ephemerality of humanity is starkly contrasted with the eternal symbol of the sea.

In *Soledad*, the conflicted nature of the human condition is revealed in Solitario's contradictory reaction to Amor's death. Whilst he mourns her loss he also clearly delights in having destroyed Amor, and banished the ghost of his mother. This is seen in the final stanza of *Soledad*: "lo arrastré a su nada / el me había buscado. / ¡Qué bien me llevaba!..." (Méndez 1945, 11). By the end of the play Solitario has moved from an adolescent in *Amor* to maturity in *Soledad* to fully embrace his fate with Soledad. A parallel can be drawn between Solitario's rejection of his mother and Kristeva's concept of the abject (1980), described here by Leitch:

The abject, for instance, is as important to the "subject" as its "object". The abject is what the subject's consciousness has to expel or disregard in order to create the proper separation between subject and object. The mother is split into two parts: she is the prototype of subsequent objects that the subject will desire or hate, but she is also the despised ground of infantile

dependency and bodily need. [...] Both matter and mother are *abjects* for the fantasy of self-creation. (Leitch et al. 2001, 2167)

Solitario's ultimate rejection of Madre shows his independence from her, or to use Kristeva's terms, a separation between the subject and object. This further builds on Valender's observation of the function of Soledad in Solitario's emancipation:

Los atractivos de la independencia espiritual se simbolizan de nuevo en la figura de La Soledad, quien, haciendo alarde de su libertad lo mismo que de su integridad moral – “¡Soy Soledad, o espejo en que se miran / los que a encontrarse, al fin, se han atrevido!” (III, 40) -, va ganando cada vez mayor ascendiente sobre el ánimo del protagonista, hasta finalmente imponerse. (Valender 1999, 413)

Yet, taken as a theme across both plays, Solitario's agency for independence becomes further problematized. In *Amor*, Luz is depicted as the subject of desire and Farero's dependency upon her is seen as she “guides” him to his future wife, Muchacha. Yet in *Soledad* the mother becomes a grotesque spectre, alongside Amor, who whilst he craves their company at the start of the play by the end they are rejected. Solitario's rejection of Madre and Amor allows him to be able to enact his fantasy of self-creation, shown as he chooses Soledad. Rather than Solitario, in fact it is Soledad who is his transformative agent in this act of self-creation; she is the catalyst for his rejection of Amor and Madre.

Soledad finishes with another image depiction of a tower, specifically a marble tower. This reveals a cyclical structure of repeated imagery here given that both *Amor* and *Soledad* end with visualisations of towers, and by the end of *Soledad*, Solitario is incarcerated in a tower. The marble tower

makes a clear allusion to death, given marble's association with tombs. The tower is representative of both the physical and psychological incarceration of Solitario within his own mind. It also makes reference to Calderón's *La vida es sueño* and Segismundo's fate of being locked in a tower:

SOLITARIO.

Esperanza mía
que nunca se acaba...

¡Condúceme hasta tu torre,
esa torre de marfil,
y échame las siete llaves
que ya no pueda salir! (Méndez 1945, 40)

By the end of the play, Solitario recognises that this tower is an aspect of his personality which has been inside him since birth. It also represents his tragic ephemerality, imagination and solitude:

SOLEDAD.

Esa torre está en ti mismo.

SOLITARIO.

Pues si esa torre está en mí,
sé tú la estrella que alumbre
en mi incierto porvenir.

(Salen) (Entra el Destino viéndoles alejarse por la puerta secreta.)
(Méndez 1945, 40-1)

Once again, the tower is represented here as occupying the internal realm of Solitario, as the tower moves from being external (as is depicted in *Amor* with the mise-en-scène of the lighthouse and the lighthouse keeper), to then be

transformed in *Soledad* as an internal landscape: “Pues si esa torre está en mí, / Sé tú la estrella que alumbre / En mi incierto porvenir” (Méndez 1945, 41-2). The role of destiny in *Soledad* is dramatically revealed as Destino enters the stage through the secret door, coinciding with Solitario’s revelation of his decision to chase Soledad:

DESTINO.

¡Cumpliese su voluntad,
que es ir a lo que está escrito.
Camino de su verdad,
en brazos va de su amada
que su propia Soledad! (Méndez 1945, 41)

Solitario fulfils what Destino describes here a pre-ordained destiny, reunited with Soledad. His underlying propensity towards solitude has come full circle from Farero’s earlier reference to having been born in a tower. Solitario chooses to return to a state of incarceration in the tower. On the one hand he has regained his imagination, on the other he is confined to the tower of his mind. The end of the play is therefore ambiguous, further revealing the internal conflict of Solitario, as the struggle of two opposing forces. In contrast to *Amor*, *Soledad* is no longer set inside the confines of the lighthouse. It unfolds over an unnamed grey classical space, which brutally emphasises that there is no “guiding light” from Luz, reinforcing Solitario’s choice of solitude. This use of *mise-en-scène* reinforces the play being a dramatization of an internal struggle.

Essential to Méndez’s trilogy is the issue of gender, given that she was a woman writing within the male dominated space of the theatre. Leggott described Méndez’s authorial fore-fronting of the uniqueness of her position as a “pioneer” (Leggott 2008, 132) as a lone Spanish female writer of the avant-garde in *Memorias*. She proposes that Méndez’s insistence on her

uniqueness was at the expense of her contemporary female writers, who were also active during the avant-garde. Indeed, this testimonial autobiography has played an important role in reclaiming Méndez as an important historical and literary figure of Spain's avant-garde. The focus of a lone pioneer is a thematic concern also central to *El solitario* trilogy, and to Méndez's dramatization of the existential struggle of the main protagonist. At the centre of both *Amor* and *Soledad* are two protagonists involved in a sentimental and ontological struggle, as they are forced to choose between love and solitude. It shows the second level of the play in which *Solitario* also represents the battle of the Artist and the necessary confines of solitude for the imagination. His decision to choose Soledad over Amor can also therefore be interpreted as the struggle for creativity, given that instead of choosing the conventional path to happiness, he opts instead to inhabit his imagination. Read through this lens, Méndez's insistence on being a pioneer in *Memorias* also links to her interest in the necessity of singularity and solitude as a writer, and the dramatization of this struggle in her trilogy. The latent tension in the relationship between theatre and life is dramatized in the play through this staging of an existential and artistic struggle between love and solitude.

Méndez's writing from the margins manifests itself in her self-conscious authorial position in the text. There is also a meta-theatrical awareness created in the autobiographical crossover in Méndez's representation of gender as a contended space in *Amor* and *Soledad*. This is portrayed in the conflict between the main characters and the gendered representations of their agency or passivity, which reveals a latent representation of gender and marginality in the plays. This is most evidently seen in Luz, mother of Farero, guiding Farero to Muchacha. By ensuring Farero marries Muchacha the mother proposes that he find comfort from his internal conflict with solitude in the play through a conventional marriage. Luz also has an important role to play in Farero's decision to marry Muchacha, the idealised conventional passive wife. Similarly, Luz also has a

primarily maternal function, guiding those around her to safety as the light of the lighthouse. This is seen when Farero calls her to help guide him away from solitude:

EL FARERO.

(Mirando hacia la escalera)

¡Baja, madre; tiempo brota,
tiempo sal de tu vivienda,
que mi soledad tremenda
por vosotros dos sea rota;
en esta torre remota
vivo de mis ilusiones,
me acompañan las visiones
que me acunaron de niño!
¡Venid a darme cariño
que me muero de aflicciones! (Méndez 1998, 20-21)

In this passage Farero begs Luz to go down the stairs in order to guide him away from his internal “torre remota” and prevent him from retreating back to his “ilusiones” and “visiones”, depicted here as dangerous and powerful agents. Farero stresses the importance of her maternal role, as it is precisely her “cariño” that he cites as the antidote to his conflicted state of “aflicciones”. The rhyming verse provides a formalised pattern to the rhyme scheme and reinforces the ordered nature of his thoughts. In this passage Soledad is connected to the past space of memory, as Farero calls upon Tiempo and Luz to prevent him returning to Soledad. Farero therefore relies on the assistance of Luz and Tiempo to rid himself of Soledad, revealing the underlying tension between agency and passivity as Farero is unable to carry out his intentions, he relies on the assistance of his mother. Although it is Farero who ultimately makes the decision to banish Soledad, Luz plays an integral role in this choice by safely guiding his wife to him. This struggle at

the centre of the play is further reinforced in *Amor* through the pathetic fallacy of a raging storm, further symbolising the internal emotional storm of Farero, as he chooses between Muchacha and Soledad.

Whilst in *Soledad* it is the dead ghost of Solitario's Madre who is now unable to engender any changes given that she is a ghost, she embodies a voice of conscience in the play in the aftermath of Soledad's poisoning of Amor. Once again her agency contrasts with the passivity of Solitario who takes no responsibility for the part he played in the death of Amor. He repeatedly states his fate had already been ordained by a higher power. In both versions of the play, therefore, Luz / Madre embodies the voice of reason and moral conscience. In *Amor* she succeeds in thwarting Farero's retreat to solitude, although in *Soledad* she is unable to stop Solitario choosing Soledad nor prevent the death of Amor. Her return to the stage as witness of the brutal murder of Amor by Soledad shows a refusal to passively accept the crime:

MADRE.

Te he visto, Soledad, fraguar tu crimen.
¡Contenta estarás ya de lo que has hecho!...
Tu voluntad de ser tu única dueña,
le persiguió con tu constante acecho,
hasta que la ocasión has encontrado
matándole su amor bajo su techo.
¡En vano le busqué la compañía;
afán que tuve yo, tú lo has deshecho! (Méndez 1945 30)

The mother takes on the role of the haunting voice of conscience, as a witness of the crime. The opposition between Soledad and Madre is repeatedly represented through the contrasting imagery of light and dark. In *Amor* this is shown as Soledad is a character that is described as a shadow and associated with grey, whilst the mother is associated with light. In *Soledad*, she subverts

this conventional imagery by asking the ghost of the mother from which shadow she had emerged:

SOLEDAD.

¿De dónde vienes, di, desde qué sombra?
Él para siempre te creyó perdida.

MADRE.

Y aprovechando tú de esa mi ausencia,
fácil te fue ganarme la partida.
Ya no hay nada que hacer, bien lo comprendo.
De este mundo no soy, vuelvo a mi vida.
¡Sin madre y sin amor, aquí se queda,
hijo que yo creé!... (Méndez 1945, 31)

In the mother's confrontation of Soledad she returns to her maternal role as the mother of Solitario and expresses her disillusionment at his decision to return to a state of solitude. The intertextual nature of the plays is also reinforced as Madre refers back to her long search for a suitable wife for Farero in *Amor* and how this work had been undone by Soledad's murder of Amor. The question of agency, of a need to take agency in apportioning blame is shown here through the mother's criticism of Soledad. The mother's role in both plays is to question and enforce the agency of Farero / Solitario.

Although in both versions she is a marginal character, in both cases she exhibits her agency. The tragic disillusion of the mother in the face of the cruelty of the murder of Amor leads her to return back to the grave: "Ya no hay nada que hacer, bien lo comprendo. / De este mundo no soy, vuelvo a mi vida. / [...] Hijo que yo creé!...". She shows her despair at the senseless cruelty and violence of Soledad, who has now merged to become a permanent part of Solitario's identity. As in *Amor*, there is a clear sense that the ghost of Madre and Soledad are oppositional forces who battle against one another.

Their conflict symbolises the struggle driving the plot of Farero/ Solitario's internal conflict. This struggle between virtue and vice is also a common theme of the *auto sacramental* that Méndez described the play as pertaining to. The disappearance of the mother from the stage “(*El fantasma de la Madre desaparece*)” (Méndez 1945, 31) is a defining moment in the play. Representing conscience and virtue, her demise reveals Solitario's lack of a sense of morality.

The role of the mothers has the opposite function of Soledad, for they are associated with love and companionship. Soledad by contrast is connected visually and thematically to solitude, greyness, loneliness and death. Soledad and Solitario reject the forces of life and love in order to live in isolation. From a gender perspective it is important to note that Soledad and Luz / Madre are the primary agents (as opposed to the conventional passive agents) in conflict. *Soledad* was written in 1944 in Mexico, at a time and in a society when women's roles were very much located in the domestic sphere of marriage, with the primary purpose of being a mother, and responds to the difficulty women “encountered in trying to educate Mexican men to view women as persons and not as symbols or objects” (Macías 1982, xiii). Yet the characterisation of Soledad subverts the more conventional representations of women as wives and mothers. Soledad is violent and destructive, carrying out the opposite function to a maternal role. The idea of the grotesque mother links in with a number of other plays written or produced in exile by Spanish authors who were close friends of Méndez in the 1940s, most notably Alberti's *El Adefesio* first staged in Buenos Aires in 1944 (Alberti, 1998) and Lorca's *La Casa de Bernada Alba* also staged in Buenos Aires in 1945 (Lorca, 1983). This clearly positions Méndez's plays within a theatrical canon of Spanish exile theatre, and yet her plays are not so widely discussed as these better known male authors.

Soledad represents the opposing values to Luz / Madre, as she inverts the conventional role of the life-giving maternal figure, representing as she does death and solitude. She embodies the antithesis of a life giver, by encouraging solitude, introspection and loneliness, being frequently depicted as a “sombra”. In spite of these negative elements there are also a number of more implicitly positive values represented by Soledad, such as individual choice, freewill and an essential aspect of this play artistic imagination. Soledad represents the disturbing incarnation of Solitario’s desire for these other less conventional qualities, describing herself as the mirror in which he is able to see himself: “Soy soledad, o espejo en que se miran” (Méndez 1944, 31). The two images aligned with Soledad, of being both a mirror and shadow, reinforces his inability to separate Soledad from Solitario. At the level of the plot, Soledad plays a temptress and rival of La Muchacha. Yet from a more allegorical perspective, she embodies Solitario’s conflicting desire to live a life that is not conventionally productive or happy, given that it does not end in marriage or children. As a destructive force, Soledad is described as a form of madness, depicted as a “sombra insana” by Luz: “déjalo en paz vivir su vida humana, / no le persigas con tu sombra insana” (Méndez 1998, 35). Likewise, in *Amor*, Soledad is described by Madre as having the intention of corrupting Farero, who is depicted as an “inocente criatura” (Méndez 1998, 35.). Yet Soledad is also an intrinsic part of El hombre’s character, and in *Soledad* they are unable to be separated, as their identities merge to become one. Soledad is more closely associated with creativity and imagination, given that her murder of Amor enables Solitario to be liberated from his melancholic nostalgia. The play ends with Destino stating:

¡Cumplió se su voluntad,
que es ir a lo que está escrito.
Camino de su verdad,
en brazos va de su amada
que su propia Soledad! (Méndez 1945, 41)

Destino's final comment reinforces the responsibility of Solitario for his own fate and yet is also a negation of his choice as it is described as a pre-ordained fate that "está escrito".

Soledad represents humanity's desire to live in a state of solitude. The fact that Soledad is a woman is significant for a gendered discussion of the play, as she acts as a catalyst for Farero / Solitario's existential crisis, shown in her monologue:

SOLEDAD.

Bien sé que soy la fuerza que mantuvo
el eje de su ser, que a su Destino
serví como el más fiel de los vasallos
desde la hora en que a este mundo vino.
Y satisfecha estoy de cuanto hice.
La muerte para mí nunca ha existido,
que vivo está por siempre en el recuerdo
aquello que en el fondo se ha vivido.
El encontrará en mí lo que le espera,
que es el soñar en vida lo perdido.
Todo tendrá a esa luz la nueva forma
que quiera darle su último sentido.
Soy Soledad, o espejo en que se miran (Méndez 1945, 31)

This soliloquy depicts Soledad as the fundamental driving force of Solitario's identity as the "eje de su ser". His subsequent return to Soledad is represented through a return to an identity with which he was born. Their merged identities are depicted here when Soledad describes existing in a space of "el recuerdo", suggesting that she is an integral part of his latent identity: "Aquello que en el fondo se ha vivido". Soledad argues that by returning to

her Solitario can experience what he most desires because she enables him to live through his imagination. The metaphor of Soledad being Solitario's mirror in the context of this quotation depicts her as the catalyst for his reclaiming of ownership over his imagination and memory, by allowing him the autonomy to create the version of events that he most desires. Soledad is essentially connected to creativity, as she mediates his translation of the lived experience to his reconstructed narrative of his memory. Soledad is the mirror who reflects back to Solitario the depths of his imagination and who convinces him that it is better to live in a dream world than in the reality of his conscious self. The reality of Solitario's existence is incorporated as a part of his dreams of what he had lost in life. Soledad reveals that though Solitario is fated to lose love in life, he can own it in his imagination by claiming ownership over Amor.

Returning to the question of Soledad's responsibility for Amor's murder, the question of who is to blame is also important for the gendered discourse of the play. In the first version of the play, when she is criticised by Luz, Soledad argues that Farero should take ownership of his decisions as she states: "Siempre me hablas así como si fuera / yo la culpable de su desventura" (Méndez 1998, 35). In both versions of the play, although Luz / Madre blames Soledad, her blaming only Soledad is undermined by the fact that Soledad is inseparable from Farero / Solitario, in spite of a happy or tragic outcome of the play. The apportioning of blame also explores the question of an individual's responsibility to their own conscience, given that the mother refuses to see her son's agency for his own decisions: "LUZ: Eres la causa, sí, de su locura / celosa guardadora, traicionera" (Méndez 1998, 35). However, even in the first version, *Amor*, which has a happy ending, Soledad argues that she cannot be separated from Solitario:

SOLEDAD.

Eres mío, lo has sido desde el día

en que a la luz viniste como un sueño.

Recién nacido y niño bien pequeño,

llegar te ví con tu melancolía.

(Vuelve a oírse la voz entre la tormenta) (Méndez 1998, 39-40)

Whilst Farero and Soledad are depicted as enemies in *Amor*, they are also bound to each other through their shared identity. However as Farero rejects Soledad, she remains an integral aspect of his identity. Though Farero fights his shadow (Soledad) in *Amor*, in *Soledad Solitario* embraces her. Returning to the conflict of his identity, she is depicted as his worst enemy, “Tu enemigo has sido siempre” (Méndez 1998, 39). Yet he also accepts that Soledad is also an integral part of him. She is the “espejo” reflecting a darker side of his character, governed by his imagination which in *Soledad* he chooses to embrace over Amor: “¡Oh, ven tú, mi Soledad, / dame con tu manto abrigo! *(se refugia en ella, arrodillado)*” (Méndez 1945, 39). At the end of the play, as Soledad enters the scene, Madre exits the stage, visually depicting the inability of these two life forces of death (Soledad) and love (Madre & Amor) to co-exist in the same space.

Overall, the internal conflict is primarily enacted through the battle between the female characters of Luz / Madre and Soledad. By contrast, the main male protagonists (Farero / Solitario) are depicted as having very little agency. Méndez subverts the conventional gender roles of woman as passive and man as active, as Farero/Solitario continually refer to their lives being entirely ruled by the external force of destiny following a preordained fate. In both cases the female characters act as agents of action and catalysts for change, whilst the male characters are the passive recipients of this narrative. There is a tension in this greater agency of female characters, and of the male protagonists (Farero / Solitario) symbolising humanity. This focus on the male journey of internal conflict could therefore be interpreted as Méndez’s embodiment of the male dominated intellectual and artistic space she was

writing into. In contrast, Muchacha represents the conventional wife, a passive object only of use to accompany Farero and ensure his happiness. Yet, as suggested above, it is apparent that these plays are more complex than they may first appear. Incorporating as they do aspects of the *auto sacramental*, *Amor* and *Soledad* reveal a complex web of allegorical characters and interpretations, as well as at the level of language a poetic density that reveals a more subversive theatrical space with a genealogy back to Méndez's concepts of theatre from the avant-garde years and her other writing. Méndez's theatre written in Mexico is an act of resistance because, in spite of knowing that it was nearly impossible for the plays to be performed she continued to write them: "El ser, en realidad, necesita siempre un escenario para presentarse aunque sea delante de sí mismo, en su misma vida íntima y en lo íntimo de su verdad (Méndez 2001, 63). Her plays manifest a self-conscious need in exile to continue to explore her own artistic struggle to continue to write in Mexico.

This chapter has carried out close readings of two plays written by Méndez in exile between 1938 and 1945 from *El Solitario* trilogy: *Amor* and *Soledad*. The analysis has indicated a number of shared characteristics between the plays written earlier on in Méndez's career during Spain's avant-garde. It also explored the intertextual connections that can be found between these plays and other writing from Méndez, including her poetry and autobiography. In focus began by situating the two plays in the historical and social context of the host countries they were written in: Cuba and Mexico. The comparative close readings then examined aspects of the autosacramental, *duelo*, the incorporation of other European dramatic aesthetics, gender and the focus of Méndez's plays on existential themes. The next chapter will move on to explore a number of plays written by León in exile in Argentina.

Chapter Two: María Teresa León

María Teresa León the playwright

In her autobiography, *Memoria de la Melancolía*, María Teresa León states that: “El teatro era mi paraíso perdido” (León 1998, 95). Writing towards the end of her life in this and other texts, León’s repeated return to the theatre singles it out to be an important aspect of her literary oeuvre. Yet a glance at existing criticism on León shows that her prose texts continue to receive far more scholarly attention than her plays; rendering her involvement in the theatre as an event of historical interest rather than worthy of critical engagement. There are numerous reasons why her prose texts have received more criticism than her plays, primarily this is due to the greater perceived cultural capital of prose texts. They have also received less criticism because they were not her primary literary activity, given that León wrote a variety of different texts including children’s stories, articles and reviews and so her theatre has largely been perceived as a second literary activity which is not essential to her writing. In 2003, coinciding with León’s centenary, two collections of unpublished plays written in exile were published: Manuel Aznar Soler’s edition of *Teatro: La libertad en el tejado; Sueño y verdad de Francisco de Goya* (León 2003b) and Gregorio Torres Nebrera’s edition of *Obras dramáticas y Escritos sobre teatro de María Teresa León* (León 2003a). These have been important publications for engendering critical debate around León as a playwright. Her involvement in the theatre began in earnest during Spain’s Second Republic and Civil War years, when she worked as an actor, director, writer and activist. As an actress, León most famously performed the role of Belisa in Lorca’s *Amor de don Perlimplín con Belisa en su jardín* in 1933 and later played España in Alberti’s *Cantata de los héroes y fraternidad de los pueblos* (1938) (Aznar Soler 1993, 25), and much later still performed in Buenos Aires in Alberti’s *El adefesio* in 1944 (Salvat 2005, 51). She worked as the director of the *Nueva Escena* theatre company, created by the “Comité de Agitación y Propaganda Interior de la República”

in August 1936 and as a member of the “Sección de Teatro de la Alianza de Intelectuales Antifascistas” (Gómez-Agero 2003, 212). She was integral therefore to a theatre movement that sought to change the landscape of Spain’s stage particularly during Spain’s Second Republic (1931-9).

In *Memoria* (León 1998), León describes the significance of her involvement in the *Guerrillas del Teatro* during Spain’s Civil War, claiming that: “Si a algo estoy encadenada es al grupo que se llamó Guerrillas del Teatro del Ejército del Centro” (Estébanez Gil 2003, 249). Her lived experience of performing theatre on the frontline is essential to her lifelong commitment to politics, activism and culture. It is an experience that she also recounts at length in her semi-autobiographical *Juego limpio* first published in 1959 (León 2000). León describes the *Guerrillas del Teatro* as another mode of fighting during the war:

Este llamamiento a las armas nos hizo tomar la resolución y la tomamos. ¿Por qué no ir hasta la línea de fuego con nuestro teatro? Así lo hicimos. Santiago Ontanón, Jesús García Leoz, Edmundo Barbero y yo nos encontramos dentro de una aventura nueva. Participaríamos en la epopeya del pueblo español desde nuestro ángulo de combatientes. (Monleón 2005, 480)

She describes this frontline theatre as combatively involved in the “epopeya del pueblo español”, and actively participating in the major historical events of her day. León’s theatre is rooted in action and resistance and this is reflected in her use of agit-prop whose “task was to stimulate immediate action” (Morgan 2013, 55). León’s travels during the Second Republic, and in particular her visit to the Soviet Union in 1932 with Alberti, were crucial in her exposure to this form of theatre (Torres Nebrera 2003a, 15). Its impact can be seen in the numerous articles she published on Soviet theatre, and her first play, *Huelga en el puerto*, originally published in 1937 alongside a number of

Alberti's plays in the magazine *Octubre* (Aznar Soler 1993, 26) and then republished in Torres Nebrera's 2003a edition. It is a play written in the "teatro de urgencia" (Monleón 1989, 53) genre, described by Aznar Soler as "teatro revolucionario" with a "clara intención didáctica" (Aznar Soler 1993, 26). As Nieva de la Paz affirms: "Se percibe en ella el reciente aprendizaje de las más modernas teorías teatrales por parte de la escritora (Brecht, Meyerhold, Piscator, Toller...)" (Nieva de la Paz 1999, 33). The origins of León's early theatre therefore reveal a very clear lineage to the playwriting rooted in an agit-prop and *teatro de urgencia* intention using theatre as a site of communal action for political and social change. The references to these major European playwrights reveal the breadth of León's theatrical knowledge and the importance of this for the plays she would later write in exile.

In spite of this clear genealogy León's plays written in exile following the Civil War have not been analysed from the critical standpoint of their theatrical origins. This chapter will carry out close readings of the following four plays written in exile: *La historia de mi corazón* (León 2008); *La libertad en el tejado* (León 2003b); *La Madre infatigable* (León 2003a); *Sueño y verdad de Francisco de Goya* (León 2003b), relating them to this agit-prop and *teatro de urgencia* genealogy. Whilst, as outlined above, *teatro de urgencia* refers to a form of theatre prevalent in the 1930s which included many elements of the agit-prop, I use both terms in the analysis, given that there is very little difference between the terms. The close reading also analyses the self-conscious space created by León, and the strategies she deploys to make the plays performative and create a critical reader. In doing so, it will explore the rich complexity of León's plays and therefore refute César Olivia Olivares's statement: "No es María Teresa León una mujer de teatro, en su amplio sentido de la palabra; más bien debemos hablar de una mujer de la cultura" (Olivares 2003, 254). The analysis reveals León's sustained commitment to theatre and to the urgency of her plays, despite the

fact that they were never staged. It makes the case for her plays to be read as what Montero termed “un acto de ‘no resignación’” (Montero 2000, 8).

La historia de mi corazón

La historia de mi corazón (2008)⁵ was written in 1950 in Buenos Aires and published in 2008. It is the most recent of a number of León’s plays to be posthumously published from the archive. Despite a number of publications on this play in recent years (González de Garay Fernández 2012; Virtudes Serrano 2010; Morelli 2008), overall it has received very little critical attention. This close reading of the play will analyse it from the perspective of having its genealogy in what Alberti termed the “teatro de urgencia” (Aznar Soler 1993, 27) tradition. In particular, then, the focus will be on how León confronts the question of women’s place in the theatre through agit-prop devices. It will also suggest an overlap between the lived experiences of León’s life and those represented in the play, as with Méndez’s play, a central characteristic of the text is the creation of a reflexive self-conscious dramatic space. This biographical overlap in the play is especially evident in the similarities between the main protagonist, Clara Maiquez, and León, who had also been an actress. Clara begins in the role of the young lead love interest, who, as she grows older becomes an increasingly peripheral character and ends up playing a minor role. As explored by Aznar Soler, León played a fundamental role in developing Spanish theatre, especially during the Second Republic and Civil War years, as director of the *Teatro de Arte y Propaganda* during 1937-8 and founder of *Nueva Escena* (Aznar Soler 1993, 25-34). There are some biographical parallels to her experience as the lead actress, and to her subsequent marginality in the theatre, shown in her inability to get her plays written in exile staged. The surname of the lead protagonist may also indicate an intertextual reference to one of the most acclaimed actors of the

⁵ Quotations from the book follow the page numbers of the Prologue and facsimile page numbers, as opposed to the original typed text which follows different numbers, excluding the Prologue.

eighteenth and nineteenth century, Isidoro Máiquez (Delgado 2003, 94) whose final years were also characterised by exile and marginality. As Morelli outlines in the prologue to the edition, León had intended for the play to be staged either in Buenos Aires or in translation in Italy (Morelli 2008, 12), yet in spite of her numerous contacts the play was never performed. The very title of the play *La historia de mi corazón (Drama de una vida)* points towards a self-conscious tension between the dramatized retelling of Clara's life and León's lived experiences. This is echoed in the plot as Clara begins by telling her story as the lead actress, but ends her life as the author of the play by rewriting the final scene. As with Méndez, the Calderonian motif of *El gran teatro del mundo* originally staged between 1633-64 (Calderón de la Barca 1980), of the world as a stage, is also prevalent in this play. The self-conscious space of the play also draws parallels with the self-referential nature of Calderón's plays which are: "often metatheatrical, with increasing self-reference and self-parody as the genre begins to deteriorate at the end of the century" (Out of the Wings 2012, accessed June 2015). The incorporation of this motif is primarily seen in the meta-theatrical structure of the play within a play: as Clara narrates her story to the audience, she also performs the story as an actress in Lucero's theatre company. Returning to Ruiz Ramón's definition of *metateatro* used in the Méndez chapter, meta-theatre is described as being comprised of "dos postulados básicos: el mundo como escenario y la vida como sueño" (Gómez García 1997, 547) and draws attention to its unreality. This definition of *metateatro* makes reference back to the *theatrum mundi* conceit that was so prevalent in plays from the Golden Age years. Additional references to Golden Age theatre are further depicted in the inclusion of stock characters from the *auto sacramental*, such as Barba (the old man), Lucero ("El galán") and Clara and Beatriz ("La dama"). The reference to Golden Age stock characters is especially of interest in relation to the depiction of female characters, given the later debated nature of the feminist female characterisations found in these dramas:

Lope was conscious that for the seventeenth century woman *was* different; aware of the qualities she has in common with man, he was also alive to the conflict between woman as she is and woman as her society envisages her. Thus far Cervantes keeps pace with Lope. But Lope goes further, leaving Cervantes at a half-way point in the development of feminist attitudes in the drama. Virués and Cueva present woman as Nature created her. Cervantes depicts the conflict in woman between Nature and Society. Lope too depicts this conflict, but unlike Cervantes he conceives of Nature's demands on woman as being no less dictatorial than the demands of seventeenth century society. (McKendrick 1974, 81-2)

In *La historia*, central to the plot is also the centrality of the conflict between nature and society of the female characters, shown by Clara's refusal to conform to social stereotypes or a "natural" maternal role. The feminist agenda behind the depiction of this struggle is shown in Clara's anguished narrative through the play. Whilst incorporating recognisable characteristics from the Golden Age tradition, León blends them with characteristics from *teatro de urgencia* and melodrama. This first genre is seen in the social agenda of the play which incorporates agit-prop strategies, such as directly addressing and questioning the reader, in order to provoke social change. Although the basic plot suggests a melodrama which follows the conventional love triangle narrative of the jilted lover, in fact León blends a number of genres to create a complex theatrical space. The combination of these different genres has a similar function to Méndez's use of the classics in her theatre, as León also appropriates a number of recognisable elements from different genres, which have the effect of creating a new form. The consequence is disruptive because it includes clear motifs from Golden Age theatre and melodrama, underpinned by a *teatro de urgencia* plot which questions women's role in theatre and society at large.

La historia is divided into three acts and the plot follows Clara Maiquez's transition from a young village girl with a beautiful singing voice to an actress in the theatre company of Lucero Sánchez, a famous director and actor. Act One charts Lucero's seduction of Clara, as he persuades her to take the lead role of his love interest, both on and off stage. However, by the end of Act 1 and twenty years later, Clara's unhappy professional and personal relationship with Lucero culminates in domestic violence and the breakdown of their relationship (León 2008, 22-3). At the end of Act one, a new character, Muchacha, enters and is subsequently re-named Beatriz by Lucero. By Act Two Clara has been pushed out of the lead role of the love interest by Lucero in favour of Beatriz, the younger actress. History repeats itself in life and on stage as Beatriz is also seduced by Lucero and replaces Clara as lead actress and later becomes his wife. Clara on the other hand is pushed into the minor comic role of the spinster stepmother (*La madrastra*) to Beatriz. The dramatic tension is built as Clara bitterly reflects on her now marginal position, represented in the minor role she has in Lucero's company. The play includes a number of other minor roles, such as: Muchacho, Carpintero, Cómica, Gracioso, Apuntador, Ferro, Maquinista, Hombres, Felipe, Señora 1, Señora 2, Empresario, Fotógrafo, Reporters 1, 2 & 3.

On one level the plot of the play is melodramatic. It centres on the sentimental story of Clara as the wronged woman and the love triangle between her, Beatriz and Lucero, as well as Muchacho's unrequited love for Beatriz. On another level the plot is about Clara's retelling of her past, through her internal monologue as a marginalised character. This in turn becomes representative of a wider narrative of León's thematic preoccupation with the marginalised role of women in the theatre. Clara's marginalisation is portrayed on stage as she is depicted in the stage directions as wandering in the wings of the stage for much of Acts two and three, following her replacement by Beatriz. It is also shown in her playing the character of the

stepmother (La Madrastra) of Beatriz, following Lucero's suggestion that it is a role more appropriate to her age. Clara's subservient passivity to Lucero is transformed by Act Three as she regains agency of own narrative. This is symbolised by Clara's rewriting the end of the play, as she returns to play the lead actress in the final scene, having previously played the minor role of the stepmother. Clara authors and then performs her own ending to the play whereby, instead of murdering Beatriz (both in life and in the play), as the original script outlines, she commits suicide. This suicide subverts the conventional narrative prevalent in theatre and literature of the tragic spurned woman who ends her life because of being abandoned by her lover. Clara's suicide is depicted as an affirmative choice that allows her to reclaim her identity, by rewriting her role in the play but also making a more universal statement for women at large. This wider commentary is shown as, prior to her suicide, Clara describes that her self-authored death was on behalf of a longer history of women, whose role in the theatre had remained unacknowledged. Her suicide is therefore both a reminder of these women, and a radical action that, as is the fundamental feature of *teatro de urgencia*, intends the theatre to be a catalyst for change. The end shifts the melodramatic or sentimental focus of the play onto Clara the spurned lover, to an authorial reclaiming of her agency as a woman of the theatre representative of a wider questioning of women's marginal position in the theatre.

As discussed in the Introduction, León is most widely, both critically and publically, known for her autobiographical *Memoria* (León 1998). Consequently, in the criticism of her plays there has also tended to be a critical focus on themes of a melancholic return to memory, autobiography and exile. This is seen in Morelli's comments in the prologue to *La historia* which is described primarily as a staging of León's memory: "no es más que la escenificación de la memoria de María Teresa: la memoria que al final suplanta a la juventud y la realidad desvaídas en el vacío del tiempo" (Morelli 2008, 21). Whilst recognising the importance of memory in León's plays as an

integral motif for creating this self-conscious theatrical space, my reading argues that *La historia* is primarily concerned with the present. Whilst the plot is told through Clara's past, León's central narrative questioning women's place in the theatre is a contemporary one, albeit narrated through the lens of the past. Her use of agit-prop, *teatro de urgencia* and meta-theatrical devices show that the play centres on an active reclaiming and retelling of memory, as opposed to being merely a restaging of memory as suggested by Morelli. If *La historia* is merely a staging of León's memory then as a playwright it renders her writing as existing in a passive and unimaginative space, as opposed to acknowledging the rich creative and artistic skill of her writing.

The agit-prop context of León's plays can be related to a wider body of work produced in this area during the Civil War. Other critics have explored this rich corpus of Spanish political theatre and its historical importance as a genre, such as Jim McCarthy (1999), Emilio Peral Vega (2015; 2008a; 2008b) and Dennis Nigel (1998; 1999; 2002; 2011). It is clear that León's plays also make an important contribution to this Spanish tradition of agit-prop theatre as well as wider European agit-prop theatre. *Teatro de urgencia* was described by Aznar Soler as a "teatro revolucionario" with a "clara intención didáctica" (Aznar Soler 1993, 26), heavily influenced by the agit-prop genre. It reveals the overlap of this play with León's earlier interest, as reflected in her many articles on the subject (León 2003a), in the playwrights of the Soviet Union and playwrights such as Piscator, Meyerhold, Tairov (León 2003a, 25). These playwrights were the European pioneers of this genre and her articles on their work is an important theatrical and cultural context for reading León's plays, which include rich and varied references. As also discussed in the Méndez chapter, the intended effect of agit-prop on its audiences was similar to the Brechtian *Verfremdungseffekt*; namely to distance the audience from a cathartic, to a more critical, and therefore political response through which an audience must "bear witness" (Morgan 2013, 56-57). Cavallo describes agit-prop theatre in Italy in the following terms:

Compared to the traditional bourgeois theatre, agit-prop introduced remarkable innovations in staging technique (for example when performing in the courtyards of working-class tenements, in front of factories, in the streets, or even on the tramways). [...] Left-wing agit-prop, on the other hand, turned ‘characters’ into ‘stereotypes’ that schematised some fundamental characteristics of the various social classes. It must be emphasised that agit-prop theatre made its ‘debut’ in a revolutionary period during which cultural patterns of the nineteenth century were breaking down and a fruitful dialectic relationship was established between political innovators and creative intellectuals. (Cavallo 2001, 26)

Whilst *La historia* was written much later than the “revolutionary period” of the nineteenth century, and Cavallo discusses Italian theatre produced under the Mussolini dictatorship, it is salient that León continued to incorporate aspects of this genre into a play written in 1950 in Buenos Aires. Firstly, agit-prop is a deeply embedded aspect of her cultural heritage and education, given her travels to the Soviet Union and involvement in the Guerrillas del Teatro, where she created theatre that has been characterised as “vivo, comprometedor y estimulante” (Monleón 1989, 57). In Buenos Aires León was writing from a distance from Spain, but in spite of this she remained committed to the cultural activities of the exiled Spanish community. This commitment is also evidenced in her writing in Buenos Aires which continued to engender a dialectic relationship with its intimated audience. This is evidenced when León opens *La historia* by breaking the fourth wall and revealing the meta-theatrical premise of the play: the narrator (Clara) directly addresses the audience to retell the story of her life as an actress, or the story of her heart, therefore revealing underlying significance of the “historia de mi corazón”. Breaking the fourth wall is further depicted in the stage directions as the

public is called: “[...] suena un timbre insistente de llamado o de alarma, algo así como el que incita a los / [*escrito a mano, sustituye* presentes:]”⁶ paseantes a entrar en un teatrillo de feria, pero que pueda ser también el de la Asistencia Pública” (León 2008, 27). León establishes the play within a play, as the narrator works as a “guardarropía” (León 2008, 27) backstage at the theatre on whose stage the play has just begun. The parallel between the onstage play being performed by Lucero’s company and that of Clara’s story establishes the play within a play. Clara has the dual function of being both a narrator and protagonist, and provides a double perspective of two temporalities, the past and present being staged at the same time. This convergence of past and present via the conceit of the play within a play creates a self-conscious dramatic space. An ironic relationship is developed between the audience and the narrator figure as a consequence of the direct rapport:

Ah! ¡Ustedes, siempre ustedes! ¿De modo que eran ustedes los que me estaban esperando? Bueno, tanto da. Todos un día tenemos que rendir cuenta a alguien que no sabemos [*añadido a mano:*]⁷ / bien quién es. Mejor que sea el público. Tantos años apareciendo frente a él, accionándole, convenciéndole, aburriéndole en muchas ocasiones, distrayéndole en otras, queriendo siempre sacarle de así, quitarle preocupaciones y dolores individuales para traerle a este estado de fervor, de libertad que es seguarnos por este ámbito abierto de la fantasía. Pero en muchas ocasiones hubiera escupido de asco. Me molestaba el olor a marchito sueño a aplausos rotos, a deseos muertos, a vida machada entre dos entreactos. Luego salía ante ustedes y yo, la rota, la que vivía partida en dos como un palo

⁶ “[*escrito a mano, sustituye* presentes:]” is included in the facsimile version of the text to show that part of this dialogue was later handwritten onto the typed version of the play.

⁷ “[*añadido a mano:*]” is included in the facsimile version of the text to show that part of this dialogue was later handwritten onto the typed version of the play.

que estorba me cubría de emoción y de frío como dicen lo están las enamoradas cuando las callan con un beso. Yo estaba enamorada de mi profesión. Y ahora, ustedes y yo por última *[añadido a mano:]* / vez frente a frente. ¡oh!, ¿qué vida puedo yo contarles? Estoy ante unos jueces y en esa hora en que nada, que nada se oculta. [...] Yo, como cada uno de ustedes, oculté mi cara y tapé mi corazón. Todo ha terminado. Mi soledad ha concluido. Puedo hablarles, ¿verdad? No me juzguen, por favor, escuchen, callen, voy a contarles la historia de mi corazón. (León 2008, 27-9)

The narrator, Clara, begins by acknowledging the audience by complaining about how they behave in the theatre claiming they “judge” her. In doing so she immediately breaks the fourth wall by making the conventional roles played by the audience and the actors transparent. This opening speech also lays the foundations of the play as a whole, which centres precisely on the act of retelling the past in order to reclaim and retell the present. The opening monologue begins with Clara describing her years of work as an actress, confronting the audience with her observations of their reactions to the plays. She reverses the usual roles of the actor and the audience, describing their mixed and often unsatisfying “performance” in the stalls; reminiscent of Lorca’s *El público* (Lorca 2009). She uses a repeated refrain which reveals the tragic ending of the story from the outset: “Y ahora, ustedes y yo por última *[añadido a mano:]* / vez frente a frente. ¡oh!”. The repeated image of the actress in front of “unos jueces”, the audience, from whom nothing can be hidden, depicts the theatre as a court room and the audience as judges. In this way the theatre becomes a space of “testimonio”; and the audience play the role of witnesses judging the action. This notion of the theatre as a space for truth telling and the dual role of the audience as both witness and judge is a repeated motif of *Sueño* and *Libertad*, and reflects a fundamental

characteristic of the *teatro de urgencia*, of confronting the audience in order to engender social change.

Rather than simply enacting Clara's past memory, the play actively engages with the audience, who in turn is forced to participate in the play. This is made explicit in a later address by Clara to the audience:

Clara- (*Al público*) Ustedes también llevan dentro una cancioncilla de juventud que sirve para arrullarles los oídos los días de tormenta. No la oiré más, se lo aseguro, pero es doloroso abandonarla a la lluvia del olvido, la vida va avanzando y se nos quedan atrás demasiadas cosas alegres para no llorarlas. Poco a poco, día a día, al quererlas reconstruir notamos cómo disminuyen hasta que un soplo se las lleva definitivamente de la memoria. (León 2008, 45)

Clara describes here the impossibility of living in the present through the memory of “una cancioncilla de la juventud” and the painful but inevitable “lluvia del olvido”. However, Clara's retelling of her life story although painful does not show a melancholic response to the past. Rather it reveals that whilst the loss cannot be reconstructed, it will inevitably be replaced by the need to live in the present. It also reflects on the diminished need to reconstruct this past, and the urge instead to live in the present. This would seem to be a reflection on exile, and León's relationship as a writer with the past and the present. Later on in the play Clara and Lucero further discuss the function of the theatre, as Lucero states: “El teatro está escrito sobre la verdad”, which is rebuffed by Clara's opinion that: “El teatro está escrito sobre la vida y hecho con nuestra piel” (León 2008, 67). Clara's view of the theatre as a space for contemporary and live debate of society reinforces the importance of the *teatro de urgencia* genealogy that underpins the play. The importance of the present day vitality of the performance, and its ability to act

as a live participant in society is essential to León's earlier view of the purpose of the theatre during the civil war: "el teatro tiene que ir hacia la línea del fuego" (Monleón 2005, 480).

Clara gives an ambivalent response to her life as an actress. She describes working in Lucero's company as a "trampa de la ilusión", where she is forced to repeat the narratives of "la máscara trágica" (León 2008, 61) night after night. The self-conscious space of León's play is conveyed through the blurring between reality and performance. She describes how, as an actress, her life became inseparable from the performance of roles on the stage: "Era muy difícil vivir sin participar en el torrente de ilusiones que Lucero había desatado sobre nosotros [...]" (León 2008, 85). Clara embodies this overlap between life and spectacle, and as the play negotiates this space between the past and present it also brokers the space between life and performance. This blurring of the "real" and the "performed" is shown as Clara and Barba in turn become the audience who witness the developing relationship between Beatriz and Lucero. Not only does this suggest how life comes to imitate art, as the characters carry out the same role on stage, it also portrays a ghostly re-enactment of Clara's own past seduction. History is repeated as the young actress, Beatriz, has a similar narrative to Clara's, joining the travelling theatre company, just as Clara had, and also becoming the lead actress and partner of Lucero:

Clara- (*Con una ligera vacilación angustiosa*) Doña Clara...
¿Sabes en lo que me has hecho pensar? Pues en los espejos ¿Ya
ríes? En la mentira de los espejos o en la mentira de los ojos o
en la forma disparatada que tenemos de vernos [*escrito a mano,*
sustituye/ los unos en los otros:] en los espejos y en los ojos.
¡Vamos, niño, vamos! (*Concluyen de salir cuando entra*
apresuradamente el Apuntador) (León 2008, 111)

The symbolism of the mirror being both a reflection of the original narrative, and also its double, reflects the proliferation of these stock female characters. Clara refutes the “mentira” of the mirror and the symbolic representation of this inability to ever truly “see” oneself represented in the mirror. At the aesthetic level, this monologue shows that art can never realistically portray life, but must instead reveal an alternative reality, and at a meta-theatrical level it rejects the possibility of mimesis. Clara had played the stereotypical role of the love interest in Lucero’s company, and yet when she is deemed too old to convincingly continue in this part she is swiftly replaced by Beatriz. From the very beginning of Act One, there had been a premonition of Clara’s unstable position in Lucero’s company, as the Cómica attempts to warn Clara saying “(*Cortante*) A las mujeres nos cita siempre alguien/ mientras somos jóvenes”. This recalls women’s lack of agency as the authors of their own narrative, and how in the theatre young women are used as the leads to perform in roles written by men who profit from them. Describing herself as “La de antes” (León 2008, 39), a linear and historical depiction of three generations of Lucero’s female leads who were subsequently marginalised is portrayed. In the play then we see three generations of Lucero’s female leads, which reinforces the historically repeated fate of women being marginalised in the theatre. The injustice of this marginal fate is discussed by Clara, who claims that she had only ever been taught to perform one-dimensional portrayals of female characters written by Lucero and the Apuntador. When Clara no longer physically represents the young love interest, Lucero claims she has no useful function. Clara confronts this by asking Lucero:

Clara- (*Gritando también*) ¡Ya te he oído! ¡Estoy vieja para el amor, inservible para el escenario! ¿Es mi culpa? ¿Tengo yo la culpa de que tú no hayas sabido enseñarme a ser otra cosa?
(León 2008, 67)

She criticizes Lucero for only having taught her to play the young love interest. There is also the implicit criticism of the audience as witness playing their own part in perpetuating this role. Clara does not admit any responsibility at this point for having herself agreed to perform these roles, and therefore having also been complicit in perpetuating these stereotypical depictions of women. Morelli describes Clara as the “paradigma de la marginación femenina” (Morelli 2008, 20) and from this perspective depicts the play as fundamentally “un drama retrospectivo en que el personaje bucea en su yo interior, creando un doble plano temporal y espacial con avance y retroceso” (León 2008, 21). Certainly, as Morelli states, Clara does grow as a character over the course of the play. However, an important aspect of her play emerging from the agit-prop and *teatro de urgencia* genealogy, is the way this self-exploration acts as a catalyst for external change, shown in the prominence of her suicide, which is depicted as an act of resistance. This is shown in the centrality of the final scene of the play as the audience acts as a witness and León subverts the sentimental plot of the jilted lover to one that has a clear political and social intention, of questioning women’s place in the theatre.

The play disputes women’s place both in theatre and life, and in particular revolves around the question of a woman’s biological function and identity. The tension between Beatriz and Clara is further developed in Act Three when Beatriz reveals her pregnancy. Although Beatriz goes to Clara pleading for advice: “Le pido su buena voluntad para entenderme como se le pediría a mi madre” (León 2008, 151), Clara cannot conform to the maternal identity Beatriz seeks from her. Her explicit refusal to perform this conventional role of the mother either in the plot of the play they perform, or in the retelling of Clara’s life, is a subversion of their typical roles. Clara’s identity is therefore one that goes beyond the conventional notion of women’s identity being dependent on their biological function to procreate. Precisely because of the fact that Clara exceeds the limitations imposed on her identity

by Lucero, she is unable to have a place in the theatre and is therefore rendered marginal. It suggests that her identity is exclusively based on the usefulness of her body for men and that once her body no longer serves a clear biological or useful function in society she is an outcast. This could well make reference to León's experience of having her children taken away from her care in 1928 (González de Garay 2009, 18) as a consequence of her divorce, and the personal importance of this recurring motif of women's biological usefulness for her writing. As Nash (1999) describes:

The ideology of domesticity provided the foundation of traditional gender discourse in late nineteenth-century Spain. As in Europe and America, this model of good mothering and housewifery- the product of male thought- generated the notion that women's ambitions had to be exclusively limited to home and family. (quoted in Johnson 2003, 11)

Given that León's ambitions went beyond the home and family in her career as a writer, she was deemed unfit to be a mother. Her identity as a woman in Spain in 1928 went beyond the boundaries of the accepted roles and being a divorced woman without her children, led her to Madrid in 1929, where she redefined her identity in the elite circles of the avant-garde (González de Garay 2009, 20). Clara from *La historia* is also a woman whose identity defines the conventional defined roles for women, firstly, by being an actress, immersed in the public space and, secondly, as an unmarried infertile middle aged woman. As a consequence Clara describes herself as no longer having a viable identity: "Clara- (*Desventurada*) Pero no me lo pida a mí que soy estéril, una planta a quien helaron el fruto. ¡No sé nada, no puedo servirle para nada!" (León 2008, 153). Clara's life is depicted in the play as one that consists of constantly seeing an uncanny reflection of her younger self in Beatriz: "Aquello era vivir mirándose en un espejo continuamente" (León 2008, 149). In spite of this Beatriz repeats Clara's role as the young love

interest in the travelling theatre company and, apparently on the path to fame as an actress, she too describes herself as occupying an entirely marginalised position: “¡Estoy sola! A quién puedo pedirle ayuda” (León 2008, 153). Beatriz takes on the same historical trajectory as Clara and the Cómica’s before her, being a woman who is used by Lucero when they are young, but once they have passed a certain age are depicted as having no purpose. Beatriz’s pregnancy also spells disaster for her ambitions as a fledgling actress launching her career, showing how she has been trapped by her gender. There is also a criticism of the female actors, who appear unable to support or console one another, despite the fact that they are all equally trapped in their different roles of stepmother (Clara), lover/mother (Beatriz) and grandmother (Cómica). On one level it is clear that León’s call for an awakening of social and political conscience is clearly aimed at women, calling for a joining of forces for a powerful collective voice symbolised by Clara’s final speech at the end of the play, as opposed to an individual voice. *La historia* is not exclusively a condemnation of patriarchy as Morelli (2008) and Vilches Frutos (2014) have stated; it is also a call to arms to women. Rather than simply criticising Lucero, the play makes a call for women to be critical of their own behaviour and to take control of and write their narratives. León’s audience, especially for her radio plays written in Argentina, had a by and large female audience (Baur 2005, 108), and therefore her agit-prop intention is also aimed at them.

Clara is a problematic character for Lucero, because she is both too old to play the lead love interest and yet also too young to enact convincingly the spinster character, and therefore evades a neat categorisation within stock roles. The stock roles are ones that the audience would have been aware of, adding to the self-conscious space of the plays, as León shows an awareness of the demands she makes upon the audience in challenging these roles. Clara’s refusal to conform to the stereotypical representations of women is evidenced in her refusal to fulfil the role of the stepmother. What unravels in

the play is Clara's rejection of the female stereotype that she and her predecessor (Cómica) and successor (Beatriz) had been forced to perpetuate. It is an irony that Clara's predecessor is the Cómica as this is also the role that Clara is forced to take on following her usurpation from Beatriz. Clara's decision to commit suicide at the end of the play, and the dramatic tension that is built in the final act, theatricalises her subversive decision to re-author her role and her life; her refusal to continue to enact, and therefore continue these stereotypes, shows that the play centres on her agency. She does this to regain ownership over her individual narrative, which in turn becomes symbolic of a reclaiming of the collective narrative of women's place in the theatre. Her final speech clearly shows that rather than simply staging the memory of a lost past, the play is about an active reclaiming of identity. In her decision to commit suicide, for the first time in the play she takes agency over her actions. Instead of blaming Lucero for not having adequately trained her to play other roles, she authors her own plot:

Clara- (*Desconcertada*) ¿Yo? ¿Qué papel he representado? Me he quedado llena de fragmentos de mujeres, de girones de otras mujeres que me han dejado sus palabras. Perdóname si estuve inconveniente. (León 2008, 159)

Clara describes here how she had been playing the role of multiple fragmented female characters. The irony and humility of Clara's tone is completely transformed by the end of the play because, by taking the decision herself as to how the play will end, she ultimately chooses what her role will be in the play. Rather than Clara being authored by Lucero and the Apuntador, in writing her ending, she claims authority over the narrative. This is reinforced in the *mise-en-scène* as the side-lined actress moves from the wings to centre stage. Clara's authoring is an act of reclaiming on stage of her own identity but also collectively, historically, of all women in the theatre:

¡Cómo iba la pobre Clara Maiquez a terminar su drama envenenándote como el autor quería! No, vivid todos. Clara Maiquez se va a un cruce lejano, a un andén perdido a terminar su historia y ya no será más un estorbo, ni un mal consejo, ni una amante despreciada, ni un testigo incómodo, ni una sombra, ni una envidiosa, ni se le atragantarán esos celos ruines que se alimentan de lo mejor de mi corazón. (*Aturdidos los cómicos reaccionan en la coulisse. Lucero, verde de ira. Sus sueños de triunfo los está haciendo añicos Clara Maiquez*)

¡Vivid felices! (*Levanta la copa*) Veneno de teatro, agua teñida quiero brindar por las pocas mujeres que se atrevieron a contar su historia. (*Lucero se abalanza, tira bruscamente la copa al suelo, agarra a Clara y la zarandea con desesperación*) (León 2008, 179)

By contrast to the conventional tragic female suicides, Clara's death is the mechanism through which she transforms grief and marginality into a powerful reclaiming of her role as a storyteller. Clara frustrates the stereotypical characterisation of the jealous older woman, with the affirmation of her own agency in this role. In this way she subverts Lucero's denigration of her as the jealous older woman and shows that central to the play is the concept of the theatre as a space for agency and transformation. León uses her play for a politically motivated agenda, asking questions of women's role in the theatre and their agency, or rather lack of agency, as protagonists and authors of the female characters they perform. For Clara, women are not united through an arbitrary biological function as bearers of children, instead her expression of solidarity is based on women's shared experiences of marginalisation in the theatre: "quiero brindar por las pocas mujeres que se atrevieron a contar su historia" (León 2008, 179). Vilches de Frutos describes Clara's suicide as: "[...] un ejercicio de libertad frente a un presente que no

tiene nada ya que ver con los sueños de una muchacha educada sentimentalmente para depender de los varones” (Vilches de Frutos 2014, 37). Whilst Clara’s liberation is, as outlined here, one that liberates her from a patriarchal theatre governed by Lucero and the Empresario, Clara’s authoring of her own story relates to León as a playwright. Essential to León’s theatre is the agit-prop “awakening” of the audiences’ conscience. It also shows that Clara’s emancipation comes not just from being emotionally independent, but fundamentally through her imagination and the powerful act of writing. In Clara’s voice what we see is the transition from a beautiful singing voice at the start to a powerful voice with a clear political agenda at the end. In the final scene Clara replaces the Apuntador and Lucero as the author, and goes against the commercial requirements of the Empresario. Therefore, not only does she liberate herself emotionally from Lucero; most importantly, Clara has freed her imagination to become her own author. It is this powerful awakening that creates the subversive space of resistance in the play. There is a tension in this affirmative act of resistance ending in her annihilation through her death. León also acknowledges the historically impossible space for women’s voice and their inevitable obliteration in the theatre, through Clara’s own self destruction. Whilst Clara ends her narrative through a suicide it is important to highlight this as a powerful act that feeds into a context of important women working in the theatre in Spain and Latin America at this time. Margarita Xirgu and Lola Membrives who were examples of influential who had real agency in the theatre. In this sense Clara’s suicide is less about an inevitable obliteration and symbolises the agit-prop belief in the power of theatre to engender political and social change.

La madre infatigable

In Gregorio Torres Nebrera’s edition of *Obras dramáticas y escritos sobre teatro* (León 2003a) he publishes four of León’s plays, and a number of articles she wrote on theatre. These include her first play *Huelga en el puerto*,

an adaptation of Galdos' *Misericordia*, *La libertad en el tejado* and two radio plays *La madre infatigable* and *La historia de mi madre*. Both of the radio plays focus on the relationship between a mother and her child and especially of the sacrifices made by the mother for her. *La madre* is a dramatized account of the integral role Cervantes' mother, Leonor Cortinas, and her daughter played in his literary career. It especially focuses on the sacrifices made by both to ensure his bail from prison which enables him to write *El Quijote*. The individual narrative of Leonor is used by León to pay homage to mothers at large. The play was first published in 2003 (León 2003a, 17-9), but originally written at the beginning of the 1940s (Hormigón 2004, 164) and, as suggested by Hormigón, is likely a draft version she never completed. The play's focus on Cervantes' mother, Leonor, connects to the importance of Cervantes as a literary figure for León, most clearly evidenced in the biography she wrote of Cervantes, entitled *Cervantes, el soldado que nos enseñó a hablar* (1978) (León 2003a, 290). There is also an earlier significance of Cervantes for her given that Alberti rewrote and staged *Numancia* in 1937 (Torres Nebrera 2003a, 60-1). This other type of prose written by León, historical biographies, is rarely referred to in consideration of her knowledge and interest in Spanish history. The play recasts the famous "official" narrative of one of Spain's most famous writers, to retell it from an "unofficial" perspective of the women integral to Cervantes' writing, but forgotten by history. For limitations of space this section will only analyse *La madre*. It is important to note that beyond Torres Nebrera's analysis in his introduction, excepting Hormigón's "Casi un melodrama. Notas de la escenificación de *La historia de mi madre*" (Hormigón 2004, 164-71), neither of these plays have received critical attention. Given that *La historia* and *La madre* are both radio plays, this is likely to be a consequence of the lesser cultural capital of radio plays, and that the "*novela radioteatral* has its roots in oral culture" (Rea 2013, 19). Both plays conform to melodrama and were primarily written for a female audience, which has historically had less cultural capital than themes such as war and politics. This omission is surprising given the importance of León's

work in the radio, and that towards the end of the 1950s she worked at *Radio Splendid* and *Radio el Mundo* in Buenos Aires (Baur 2005, 108). Other criticism on León has focused more on her contribution to film from the 1940s onwards, such as Wheeler (2011) and Emiliozzi (2005). The critical landscape is, therefore, incomplete, because it has tended to privilege a narrative of León that can be characterised by a melancholic preoccupation with memory and exile, epitomised in *Memoria* (León 1998). *La madre* was performed by la *Asociación de Directores de Escena de España* in 2003 as part of the León centenary celebration and in conjunction with the “Premio María Teresa León 2003” awards ceremony at the Centro Dramático Nacional, Madrid. It was directed by Juan Antonio Hormigón and included in the cast was Salvador Arias, one of León’s colleagues from the *Alianza de Escritores Antifascistas*. This casting choice by Hormigón politicises the play, rooting it in León’s political and cultural commitment. In his notes he describes the directorial choice of foregrounding the character of *La hija* in order to reinforce the play, in which “la crónica testimonial se sobrepone en este caso a lo emotivo” (Hormigón 2004, 166).

La madre is introduced in the first person by the narrator and author María Teresa León. Her direct address to the listeners, whom she describes as her “queridas amigas oyentes” (León 2003a, 273), claims proximity with the listener. As a genre, the radio play had more potential to create an intimate connection between the listeners through the narrator, given that it would be listened to in the private domestic sphere of the home. From the outset the play challenges the official histories that continue to omit women:

M. T. León.- ¿No les impresiona a ustedes, mis queridas amigas oyentes, el pensar que desde hace tantos siglos hay un sentimiento que no tiene variación y ha resistido a todos los cambios? Si pensamos que la inclinación maternal, con todas sus características de sacrificio y defensa, ha acompañado toda

la historia del hombre, nos llega a parecer poca cosa este homenaje que queremos rendirle. Pensando en ello, y en el momento de ponerme a escribir, se me vino a la imaginación uno de los instantes más conmovedores de mi vida. Las bombas de la guerra habían asolado Alcalá de Henares, y no sé quién llegó despavorido trayendo a Madrid, y entregándolos a la junta de Recuperación del Tesoro Artístico, unos papeles. ¿Qué es esto, qué traes?

Voz.- La partida de nacimiento de Miguel de Cervantes. (León 2003a, 273)

The play is set in Alcalá de Henares, Madrid, where Cervantes was born in 1547. She contextualises the play in a concrete location in a specific historical moment, and uses this retelling of Cervantes' life as the means to tell the story of his mother: an overlooked historical character. As with *Sueño* and *Libertad*, the play is set during a politically turbulent context of war. Whilst there is a similar autobiographical approach in retelling the "unofficial" history of one of Spain's most famous authors, comparable to *Sueño*, the play is much shorter, spanning a mere 18 pages compared to *Sueño*'s 200 pages. León's reworking of Cervantes' story is especially subversive because she gives a political voice not only to a woman, but to a mother and, as she states in the opening text, represents the collective voice of all mothers, overlooked by a male dominated narrative of history. Through this format León deconstructs what Wieviorka termed the "biologization of social thought" (Nash 1999, 26), to fictionalise an "official" story which demythologizes the hierarchical order of society by the subordination of the sexes (Nash 1999, 26). León does this through melodrama, a genre often used to reaffirm these conventional discourses. This highlights León's commitment to bringing women's narratives of historical agency from the domestic and private sphere and rewriting them in her plays as legitimate within the officially recognised and

prestigious patriarchal grand narratives of war and politics. In the play León affirms the importance of maternal sacrifice and resistance in the domestic sphere as essential untold “unofficial” narratives of those “official” histories. Cervantes’ makes explicit the indebtedness of his success to his mother Leonor Cortinas shown as he states: “MIGUEL.- Mi madre me dice que mejor que las espadas son los libros y me repite: la sabiduría entra por los codos. (*Rien*)” (León 2003a, 277). Leonor is essential to Cervantes’s decision to write, having instilled in him the importance of education and literature from an early age. Despite living in poverty, she ensures he receives an education, and later when he is condemned to prison, enables him to return home by working overtime with her daughter to collect enough money for his bail. Leonor describes her maternal characteristics as resulting from a universal instinct common to all women: “La historia de las madres no cambia. Es un collar de amor que vamos transmitiendo y llega de tan lejos que nadie ha podido encontrarle la primera perla” (León 2003a, 281-2). As can be seen from this quotation, the play has a sentimental register, and is reminiscent of the *novela rosa* or sentimental genre format. Indeed, Hormigón has described the play as being “casi un melodrama” (Hormigón 2004, 163) and says that whilst it incorporates aspects of melodrama it also subverts them for a political and social agenda of inscribing women with political agency. This is evidenced in the detailed description of Leonor and her daughter Andrea living in poverty to ensure that Cervantes would be freed from prison. Once freed, Cervantes chooses to return to war and following, his departure his mother dies “de fatigas, soledad y penas” (León 2003a, 290). Whilst his mother’s demise is a tragic martyr-like death, her commitment throughout the play to encourage Cervantes to write, ends with him dedicating *Don Quijote* to her memory:

Miguel.- Madre, ya no recibirás con tu pecho amplio, cuajado de cariños, no llegará tu Miguel a leer sus humildes versos ni conocerás jamás la historia del Caballero Alonso Quijano,

siempre bondadoso y burlado por la vida. Todos los romances...
(*Comienza a oírse el romance del principio*) que tanto te
gustaban, todos los paladines, yo los he dejado unidos en mi
Don Quijote a la talla de nuestro tiempo. Recibí de ti la alta
manía de soñar, madre, pero, ¡ay!, como las cosas humanas no
son eternas, especialmente la vida de los hombres, yo he de
poner sobre mi corazón tu muerte. Como luego pondré la mía.
Hasta luego, madre.

(*Música*)

M. T. León.- Miguel de Cervantes, puesto ya el pie en el estribo,
caminaba hacia la Gloria. (León 2003a, 291)

In this scene Cervantes describes the indebtedness of his “alta manía de soñar” to his mother. Significantly, León, who has the final word in the play, returns in the role of the narrator and echoes the idea of Cervantes “Gloria”, also seen in *Sueños*. In doing so, she contrasts the difference between Leonor’s fate as the “unofficial” narrative, compared with Cervantes lasting “official” one. Read in the context of her other plays, León focuses on Leonor’s historical agency and by doing so she questions the authority of Spain’s historical canon, reaffirming that central to her play is a feminist agenda, to inscribe women and their contribution into a historical narrative and into a canon from which they had been systematically excluded.

La libertad en el tejado

La libertad en el tejado was first published in the Segovian magazine *Encuentros* in 1989, though as Vilches de Frutos has stated, it was likely written much earlier, probably between 1947 and 1948 (Vilches de Frutos

2010, 691). As evidenced in León's correspondence the final edit of *La libertad* was given to Salvador Arias in Rome, one of the past actors of Las Guerrillas del Teatro (Aznar Soler 2003b, 13). The play has been published in two different editions by Manuel Aznar Soler (León 2003b) and Gregorio Torres Nebrera (León 2003a). This analysis uses the Aznar Soler edition. *La Libertad* is a three-act play set on the rooftops of a post-war city, namely Madrid and most likely in the neighbourhood of Argüelles, where León grew up and which was destroyed during the war. The play is set, as Torres Nebrera suggests (Torres Nebrera 2003a, 25), in an imagined landscape of the repression of the early years of the Franco dictatorship. This is reflected by the fact that the characters live not only in the physically liminal space of the rooftops, but also in between a real and dreamlike state psychologically. The main characters of the play are: La Chica; La Sonámbula; La Razón; Sabelotodo; El Hombre; El Otro Hombre; Madame Pimentón; Maricastaña and El Muchacho.

Thematically, the plot centres on a lost homeland, which is a consequence of the characters living in a form of internal exile on the rooftop. It follows El Hombre's struggle to recapture an endangered liberty lost when La Sonámbula falls to her death from the rooftops. She falls because he rejects La Sonámbula, after hearing La Chica and being so overcome by his lust for her, that he follows La Chica instead of La Sonámbula / Razón, who represents the possibility of redemption from the past horrors of war through testimony. Following the death of La Sonámbula in Act Two, Sabelotodo and the other neighbours of the rooftops (Madame Pimentón and Maricastaña) hold a trial to bring the person guilty of murdering La Sonámbula / Razón to justice. Over the course of the trial, El Otro Hombre is revealed as a traitor who had been sent to spy on El Hombre. Once his betrayal is revealed he commits suicide by throwing himself off the rooftop because he is unable to live with his guilty conscience. El Hombre is charged by the judges to carry the corpse of La Razón on his back in order to awaken the population by

carrying her “por las ciudades y por los caminos produciendo terror. Pero el terror no provendrá de ti sino de ellos, que te han abandonado” (León 2003b, 198). This rather gruesome end echoes the myth of Atlas, who is forced to carry the world on his back as penance for displeasing the Gods and it also has a Christian resonance with Christ carrying the sins of the world for humanity. Driving the plot, therefore, is an “awakening” of the characters out of their soporific state to the realities of the post-war city below the rooftops.

Of central importance to the play is the theme of justice, and the working through of historical memory is prevalent. La Chica and El Muchacho embody the Republican and Nationalist generation of Spain, who were born under the Franco dictatorship and wanted liberty from the repressive society they were growing up in. El Hombre and El Otro Hombre are representative of the Spanish generation that lived through the horrors of the Civil War and who had been marked by the trauma of those years. Guarding the soporific space of the rooftops is Sabelotodo who also acts as a narrator of events. Whilst he has more insight than the other characters into the city beyond the rooftops, shown in his explicit criticism of the reality of what is happening outside this space, he is nevertheless equally impotent in effecting any change. Indeed, he, Maricastaña, and their neighbour Madame Pimentón actively ignore the reality of the present by remaining in the memories of the past. They represent a generation who had lived through Spain’s Civil War. These characters are most symbolic of the soporific attitude of a post-Civil War generation who lived under the Franco regime, without questioning it or taking any measures against it. Indeed, it takes the death of the La Sonámbula who subsequently transforms into La Razón, to force them out of their unquestioning post-war society existence. In the trial scene of Act Three, the residents have their political and social conscience “awoken”, as a consequence of having witnessed the death of La Sonámbula. They show this by acting as judges in the trial of El Hombre and El Otro Hombre to apportion blame for her death. These characters that have retreated

to the rooftops are symbolic of this commentary on the state of post Civil War Spain, as encapsulated by Sabelotodo's comment that: "Vivir es verbo demasiado brillante para lo que aquí hacemos. Morimos, señor, de vivir, esa extraña manía de los hombres" (León 2003b, 117). The rooftops of the first two acts of the play represent a deathly liminal space of being trapped in a past memory, unable to engage with the present. It is in the death of La Sonámbula and her reincarnation into La Razón that the agit-prop awakening of their political and social conscience is depicted. The play remains ambiguous, evidenced in the tension at the end of the play where Sabetolodo remarks "¡Pobres! Creen aún que un sombrero invisible sirve para algo" (León 2003b, 201). What had initially appeared to be a happy and affirmative ending, as La Chica and El Muchacho escape the rooftop together is left as ambiguous.

The focus of this analysis will be on León's representation of women's historical agency and the use of devices from agit-prop theatre. The ambiguous ending references the wider political and historical events taking place in Europe. The Cold War (1947 – 1991) across Europe was manifested during these decades of León's exile through key events over the twentieth century, including the construction of the Berlin wall in 1961, Che Guevara's death in 1967 and Mao Tse-tung's systematic abuse of human rights in China. Although the concrete date in which León wrote *Libertad* remains uncertain, these and other political events marking the Cold War would certainly have influenced her writing. León lived in Buenos Aires for the majority of her exile from Spain but remained committed to Communism, visiting China in 1957 (Tsay 2004, 169) following on from the much earlier 1932 visit to the Soviet Union (Torres Nebrera 2003a, 15). In this sense, León's aesthetic and political views must always be explored through both a Spanish and a broader European and international lens.

La Chica is introduced in the play as a character occupying a marginal space depicted as she is often seen on the edge of the rooftops. At the start of the play she climbs onto the rooftop with El Muchacho and traverses the edge of the rooftop, climbing the chimneys to see the "fiesta" taking place in the town below (León 2003b, 123). La Chica and El Muchacho immediately differentiate themselves from the other characters of the play by engaging with the city beyond the rooftops. Whilst they constantly move around the stage, the other characters (Maricastaña, Madame Pimentón, Sabelotodo) show their entrapment on the rooftops by their onstage immobility. La Chica and El Muchacho therefore operate outside the soporific confines of the rooftops. This is further conveyed as they survey the landscape of the city as though it were not their own, becoming the observers of the city, from which they have a critical distance. As they look across the horizon of the city, their conversation adopts political implications. Their description of the sky scrapers and banks suggests a capitalist city, primarily driven by money making and profit. La Chica, as a removed observer of the landscape, suggests the population below constantly moves towards death, driven by an urge of the city that is not their own: "Gente apresurada que cree ir a alguna parte..., ¿a la muerte?" and later: "Estoy creciendo entre gente golpeada. Desde chica, no he oído más que ¡ay! alrededor de mí." (León 2003b, 143). La Chica becomes the spokesperson for this landscape of suffering, and for a population who lack this free will. She is constantly playing on the rooftops and though she is not asleep like the other characters, she does repeatedly describe a desire to return to her "acantilados infantiles" (León 2003b, 150), signifying a desire to return to a childish age of innocence, back to a period unaffected by war. In order to escape her reality, La Chica plays games and sings songs to evade the reality of her life on the rooftops. She deploys these tactics in order for life to prevail over death: "Quiero hacer de todo en la vida, y lo que nos rodea es la muerte. ¡Las campanas están exhaustas de anunciarnos un día más en el que nunca pasa nada!..." (León 2003b, 145). La Chica is associated with symbols and images that are outside the confines of the rooftop, such as the

sky and the moon, that visually represent her continuous attempts to move beyond the limited space of the rooftops. La Chica's movements are also confined by the men who dominate the rooftops, for instance, as El Hombre emerges Sabelotodo tries to banish La Chica from the rooftops. He suggests that she would prefer to live in a state of her own dream world and nostalgic past, which is no longer a present day reality: "SABELOTODO.- [...] ¿No prefieres la soledad de tus acantilados infantiles?" (León 2003b, 150).

Through La Chica the author develops a meta-theatrical awareness of the character's position within the historical, political and social contexts, and she is one of the only characters to interrogate her position on the rooftops. This is seen as La Chica decides which character she will perform in the play, choosing between Andromeda or Juliet: "LA CHICA.- ¡Oh, yo que estuve dudando entre ser Julieta o Andrómeda!" (León 2003b, 148). La Chica's stated agency in choosing which character she will perform in the play is important because it also becomes synonymous with choosing an ending where she refuses to be a victim in spite of her tragic circumstances. La Chica also describes El Muchacho sounding like an English actor and therefore makes reference to the theatricality of their conversations, and the connection to the *theatrum mundi* conceit. In the mock-heroic conversation between La Chica and El Muchacho, she articulates her awareness of being the individual narrative within the collective:

EL MUCHACHO.- ¡Yo mataré al Dragón con mi espada
adamantina!

LA CHICA.- ¡Vamos, hombre, pareces un actor inglés!
(*Recitando*) Yo mataré al Dragón con mi espada adamantina.
Así, así. Tiene que oírte la Historia.

EL MUCHACHO.- La mitología.

LA CHICA.- La Historia. Cuando se hace el héroe le oye a uno la historia. La mitología es un compendio abreviado. (León 2003b, 126)

La Chica embodies multiple intertextual references and makes explicit an overlap between art and life, relating to the self-conscious space created in León's plays. La Chica's first encounter with the dragon portrays her as being a character that is both active and defiant. She breaks with classical depiction of the meek classical Andromeda, who waits to be rescued from the dragon by Perseus. By contrast La Chica states that she will rescue herself, be her own hero. La Chica's awareness of her position and agency separate her from the other characters, who live in a soporific state. The passivity of the other characters is exemplified when Maricastaña asks Sabelotodo whether or not he is awake, and he replies: "*(Soñador)* Sobre un tejado no se está nunca bien despierto" (León 2003b, 128). Sabelotodo's ambiguous answer of never knowing whether one is awake or asleep on the rooftop shows a passivity that starkly contrasts with La Chica's agency. This is further reinforced when La Chica makes political references, whereby she directly discusses the state of education during the Second Republic. She describes the changes that took place for women's education through increased access, which is now no longer available: "Tonto, hace tiempo que nuestra educación no comete imprudencias. Eso era antes... Toman con nosotras tantas preocupaciones..." (León 2003b, 141). La Chica voices León's experiences, but also remains a literary construct. She embodies the complex space between fact and fiction in the play. La Chica's physicality and agency define her character, especially evidenced when El Hombre chooses her body instead of following La Sonámbula:

LA CHICA.- (*Decidida*) No vaya. Sea hombre. Resístate... (*Se van alejando LA SONÁMBULA y EL HOMBRE hacia el filo de los tejados*) ¡Vuelve!... ¡Deténgase!... ¡Va dormido!” (158).

What attracts El Hombre to La Chica is her humanity: “Escuche. Alguien canta sin rencor a la vida” (166). La Chica is primarily characterised by her physicality, and this is reinforced as the Sleepwalker describes her as “ese pequeño producto de la tierra” (168). It is precisely her humanity and carnality that makes her attractive to El Hombre. La Chica is initially depicted as having been responsible for the death of La Sonámbula, having encouraged El Hombre not to follow her. In spite of her agency, she takes on a passive bystander role in La Sonámbula’s death. For a play that is so much focused on collective and social responsibility, La Chica is as much of a passive bystander as the other characters and therefore has her own portion of the blame:

SABELOTODO.- Vuelve a tu acantilado a ser el ideal inconsciente. Distráete con los sueños del futuro. No hay mejor linterna mágica para dormirse. (*LA CHICA se queda dentro de la guardilla*). (161)

In the aftermath of the fall, La Chica reverts to being more of a child than a woman, wanting to return to her lost childhood and perhaps also to her lost innocence: “Quiero volver a mis acantilados infantiles! (*Casi llorando*)” (171). Her assertion at the end that she leaves the rooftop “para que la humanidad vuelva a empezar” (201) shows her intention for change and her hopefulness of engendering this change. The death of La Sonámbula then, although a tragedy, is depicted as a necessary process of violence that enables a new generation, La Chica and El Muchacho, to leave the rooftop. Sabelotodo’s comment at the end of the play, however, suggests a less hopeful end: “¡Pobres! Creen aún que un sombrero invisible sirve para algo” (201).

Overall then, La Chica represents affirmative values such as agency, but she is also flawed, and as an embodiment of Spain's post war generation, she offers an ambiguous representation.

La Sonámbula embodies the narrative arch of transformation over the course of the play, embodied at the beginning as La Sonámbula but ending as La Razón. Whilst all of the characters in the play go through a process of transformation, a transition from unconsciousness to consciousness, she undergoes the greatest transformation, shown as Maricastaña and Madame Pimentón wake up. La Sonámbula has the role of awakening the political and social conscience of the characters on the rooftops, in order to document the brutalities of the past. This confrontation with the past reveals that the plot is primarily preoccupied with historical memory, which is recuperated, once again, by a female character. In a comparable way to León's characterisation of Goya's paintings documenting the turbulent political and historical moment in which he was living in *Sueño*, similarly La Sonámbula / Razón seeks from El Hombre and El Otro Hombre a testimony of the lived horrors of war. She persistently argues that it was only through this process of capturing the trauma of the past that it can be properly reconciled in the present and, crucially, enable humanity to carry on living with an awakened conscience and not to repeat the tragedy of the past.⁸ In *La libertad*, this intended documentation is thwarted as El Hombre follows La Chica, instead of La Sonámbula / Razón. The results of this are catastrophic, as she falls to her death from the rooftops, and yet precisely as a consequence of this violence the other characters are "awoken". Violence and brutality are presented as a necessary part of the process of change. This is reinforced as El Hombre is

⁸ Carlotta O'Neill *Circe y los cerdos; Cómo fue España encadenada; Los que no pudieron huir* (1974) was one of the major "testimonio" plays written in the aftermath of Spain's Civil War. Whilst this is not discussed here, there are also very clear and interesting connection between O'Neill's own testimonial/autobiographical writing and her theatre. This further suggests the interesting potential field to be opened up in these discourses.

forced to carry La Sonámbula / Razón's rotting corpse, a grotesque visualisation of the violence of war, which he must show to the people below the rooftops to remind them of the brutality of war. This is another moment in which the audience is made to be aware of themselves as witnesses to the play, and become implicated in the death of La Sonámbula / Razón. In this way, alongside the characters of the play responsible for the death of La Sonámbula. By deploying agit-prop, the audience is also implicated in the action taking place on stage, forcing the population to snap out of their soporific state of political, social and moral inactivity.

La Sonámbula / Razón's body is used as the catalyst for this collective change through the individual, firstly as La Sonámbula and then as a corpse. León subverts popular images of the female body as an emblem of nationhood, and, in this case, of a lost Republican nation. She embodies another allegory of Spain that was especially popular during Spain's Second Republic which abounded with idealised images of women as Nation. There is also a biographical self-conscious reference here in the play given that León (1938) famously performed the role of "España" during this period in Alberti's *Cantata de los héroes y fraternidad de los pueblos* (Aznar Soler 1993, 25). The physical manifestation of La Sonámbula / Razón begins with her living but unconscious body then ends transformed into a rotting corpse. León repeatedly deploys violent images throughout the play, which makes the intended dramatic effect upon the audience ambiguous. The incorporation of many violent images creates moments of rupture in the play, which breaks the audiences' catharsis and in doing so allows a dramatic "working through" of the trauma of her own lived horrors of war. La Sonámbula / Razón is symbolic of a lost voice of conscience and Spain's post-war generation. She is also a martyr figure who dies in order for her corpse to be used to awaken other people from their depoliticised state, as El Hombre carries her on his shoulder from town to town. The Biblical overtones are another interesting point of reference, echoed throughout the play in her language, referring to El Hombre

as “cordero” (León 2003b, 135). The rebirth of La Sonámbula from life to La Razón in death further references the narrative of Christ’s resurrection. It is further perpetuated by the Biblical language often used to describe her, depicting her as deeply embedded in the Catholic culture in which León had herself grown up.

A gendered representation of historical agency is at the centre of the play, as La Sonámbula / Razón and the female characters of the other two plays, Josefa and Clara, have their voices repeatedly ignored by the male characters. La Sonámbula / Razón and La Chica, are catalysts of change through their bodies: La Sonámbula / Razón in her death and La Chica in her sexual allure. In this binary there is a notion also of a Biblical characterisation of woman as either Eve (La Chica), who tempts men to their “fall”, or to Mary (La Sonámbula / Razón), representative of maternal love and reason. This is reinforced as it is La Chica’s physicality and humanity that is always referred to by the male characters of the play, by contrast La Sonámbula / Razón is repeatedly associated with non-physical characteristics of morality and humanity and qualities such as love and compassion. From the outset the sleepwalker is introduced to the play as an “other worldly” character who inspires fear and trepidation among the other characters. In the stage directions she is depicted as emerging from the eaves of the rooftops by coming up through the clouds:

(Gran silencio nocturno. Giran los planetas. Una sombra negra, huidiza, busca los escorzos. Se la ve ir, desconcertada, sin rumbo, de chimenea en chimenea. Mira al vacío. Por el extremo opuesto una sombra blanca. Las manos ante su busto, LA SONÁMBULA conserva el equilibrio del milagro. Canta, primero levemente, luego a toda voz. Los personajes del primer término duermen. La sombra negra se esconde cuando la blanca avanza. Es una especie de ballet con el abismo. La

negra comienza a seguir el estribillo de la canción. Es un diálogo que termina cuando ella lo encuentra y le pasa la mano por la cara, como hacen los ciegos o los niños cuando juegan al escondite)

LA SONÁMBULA.- Te atrapé. Aunque no se debe besar más que a los muertos, me gustaría besarte.

EL HOMBRE.- (*Sin querer descubrirse*) Uhm, uhm. (León 2003b, 131)

A repeated reference point for La Sonámbula is the importance of her voice as a testimonial documenting of the past. Before she is seen by the audience her voice is heard, indicating a very different representation of her as a character when compared to the primarily physical characterisation of La Chica. The representation of the sleepwalker is steeped in mythology and symbolism. Her first words to El Hombre also show her otherworldliness and foretell the importance of death in the play: “Te atrapé. Aunque no se debe besar más que a los muertos, me gustaría besarte” (131). In these lyrical stage directions the sleepwalker travels the space between a past lost generation of the Civil War and the post war generation. There is a sense of a post-apocalyptic landscape here in the description of the sky and the “*especie de ballet con el abismo*” that the Sleepwalker carries out on the rooftops. Dramatically, it calls to mind Lorca’s forest scene in *Bodas de sangre* first performed in Madrid in 1933 (Lorca 2009), given its poetically dense language but also in the prevalence of the symbolism of the moon and night. The striking description of La Sonámbula singing as she moves from chimney to chimney and the precarious nature of not wanting to fall off the roof acts as a precursor of her imminent fall. Similar to La Chica’s introduction on stage she also traverses the eaves and in doing so physically represents her transgression of the imposed limitations of the enclosed space of the rooftops. La Sonámbula occupies a

liminal and ambiguous space, spatially, as she is both inside and outside of the rooftop space, being presented as part human / part myth, is both half-awake / half asleep, and then half alive / half dead. La Sonámbula, like La Chica, embodies the liminal ambiguity of Spain's future post-war generation.

El Hombre represents war and the horrors of exile, immediately made evident by the overalls he wears from the concentration camp. La Sonámbula / Razón describes him as living in a dream-like state from which she also calls for him to return to his lost reason. Early on she states: "No me conviene escuchar desvaríos (León 2003b, 134) suggesting his lost semblance of reason. She suggests that he is not in a rational place and instead is stuck in the unresolved trauma of the past. El Hombre is able to be momentarily awakened by hearing La Sonámbula singing. Her voice acts as the catalyst that provokes him to reflect back on the past horrors of war:

EL HOMBRE.- (*Retrocediendo y balbuceando*) Sí, un sollozo..., pero pasaba por casualidad, pasaba de largo... No me debo parar en nada, pero usted cantó y yo me detuve. Me sorprendieron sus bellos ojos tan bien iluminados. Por un momento se me disipó la niebla y pensé detenerme, ayudarla a marchar por estos lugares difíciles. Y quise creer por aquí, entre los dos, podríamos encontrar un arroyo con agua limpia para una sed de semanas. Un arroyo con un alma dentro, así como en su rostro dirán que lleva el espejo de la suya y sentarnos porque mis rodillas temo que he olvidado para qué sirven. (León 2003b, 134)

The contrast between these somniferous landscapes of the rooftop is reflected in the man's trance, and although La Sonámbula is also unconscious she is politically and socially aware, as shown through her "ojos tan bien iluminados". The intention of La Sonámula / Razón is to return him through

testimony to a state of reason, having worked through the trauma of the past. El Hombre repeatedly associates the image of La Sonámbula /Razón to a cleansing stream of water of “agua limpia”, able to clear away his inability to remember his past, in order to work through it together. Another repeated motif is the importance of La Sonámbula’s eyes for awakening the characters from their stupor. There are many repeated references to other reflective surfaces such as mirrors and moons, which are associated with La Sonámbula. Reinforcing her symbolic role in the play as the “mirror” held up to El hombre’s conscience and past. La Sonámbula is the lens in which the other characters are able to see the reality of themselves and their lives. As the above scene describes, when La Sonámbula is not there to act as this mirror, El Hombre immediately forgets his conscience. He loses the importance of recounting his experiences of war, to be able to meaningfully engage in the present, and instead falls into the same trance-like state of inertia as the rest of the characters on the rooftop. This focus on El Hombre’s awakening makes reference to León’s concept of the primary purpose of the theatre being to awaken a political and social conscience in the audience, referencing the work she had carried out with the *guerrillas del teatro*. Likewise Sabelotodo describes La Razón as representative of his conscience and political self, which he actively seeks to reclaim during the play, evidenced as he describes La Razón as: “la palpitación de un seno desnudo, la razón de mi oficio de hombre..., pero ella era la razón de mi razón.” (147). On the one hand, La Razón can be read as emblematic of the potential of the Second Republic, certainly this is Aznar Soler’s reading shown in his footnote to his edition: “La República, la razón de la España republicana, destruida por la barbarie fascista.” (Aznar Soler 2003b, 147). There is another potential reading for this play, which gives a broader perspective where, as is the case with her other plays, lead female characters’ act as catalaysts for awakening political and social conscience.

The intended performance of the play is central to this awakening and to the political ramifications of embodying this on the stage. The play was written before the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, it is striking that León remained committed to the agit-prop and *teatro de urgencia* in the political intention of the play. It also reveals the latent tensions, explored by a number of critics (Nebrera 1996; Muñoz 2005; Loureiro 2005; Estébanez Gil 2003) to the complex self-reflexive space of her plays in relation to memory and the function of the past as an agent for change.

Through the process of La Sonámbula and El Hombre talking through his experiences of war and concentration camps, they address the importance of testimony for documenting his suffering, which in turn becomes representative of the broader narrative of Spain's post-war population. La Sonámbula is able to see the misery of human suffering both on and beyond the rooftops, in a similar way to El Muchacho and La Muchacha, who describe the suffering city below as they look across it in Act One. The difference between these two scenes centres on the way in which La Chica and El Muchacho describe the city from the physical perspective of the buildings and focus on the way the population expends its energy in making a living, rather than interrogating the political and social landscape. By contrast, La Sonámbula depicts the psychological terrain of the city and its population, stating: "No veo más que la miseria humana..." (León 2003b, 164). The physical and psychological landscape of the post-war terror of the city reveals a violent depiction of society, full of disturbing images and descriptions:

LA SONÁMBULA.- No veo más que la miseria humana...

EL HOMBRE.-... brotar a borbotones.

LA SONÁMBULA.- La tierra como un toro en canal.

EL HOMBRE.- El mar contra el fuego, el fuego contra el árbol,
el árbol goteando resina, el hombre contra el hombre...

LA SONÁMBULA.- El hombre goteando sangre.

EL HOMBRE.- Somos una bolsa de cosas sucias sujetas por un
hilo.

LA SONÁMBULA.- Da miedo la fragilidad del linaje humano.

EL HOMBRE.- Yo los he visto desinflados, por el suelo, con el
cabello del enemigo entre los dientes...

LA SONÁMBULA.- (*Separándose*) ¡Años terribles! (León
2003b, 164)

The conversation between La Sonámbula and El Hombre describes the trauma of the actions taking place on the rooftops. The man's description of humanity at large as: "una bolsa de cosas sucias sujetas por un hilo", depicts the terrible psychological impact of the violence of the war, echoing similar depictions from WW1 literature, such as T.S Eliot's "The love song of J Alfred Prufrock" (1915): "I should have been a pair of ragged claws. Scuttling across the floors of silent seas" (Eliot 2015, accessed June 2015) and Neruda's "Explico algunas cosas" (Neruda, accessed April 2016). At the centre of this violent landscape is the betrayal of El Hombre by El Otro Hombre, and the sense of foreboding doom of El Hombre forgetting his desire to create a testimony of his experiences: "SONÁMBULA.- (*Levantándose*) El aroma de la noche está preparado para los olvidos instantáneos" (León 2003b, 165). On the rooftops it becomes impossible for El Hombre, without the help of La Sonámbula, to remember his experiences, and he is in a continual process of remembering and then forgetting. The tension between the past and present is important because

his individual trauma reflects a broader collective narrative of Spain's lack of historical memory following the Civil War, and the prevalence of the trauma of the past. El Hombre claims he wants to remember in order to move on into the present, as he states: "No quiero olvidar. Quiero grabarme todo lo que he visto aquí para que sirva de testimonio" (León 2003b, 165). Whilst he claims his intention of dealing with the past throughout Act One and Two he repeatedly refuses to accept the guidance of La Sonámbula to help him confront his past. Indeed it is only once La Sonámbula has fallen and been transformed into La Razón that El Hombre can awaken to the importance of working through his testimony and confront the past. Aznar Soler has made reference to the incorporation of elements of the auto-sacramental:

Aunque ciertos rasgos específicos del auto sacramental –como el elemento litúrgico o piadoso y el sermón moral– hayan desaparecido aquí, algunas características estructurales del auto sacramental (alegorismo, carácter conceptual, libertad de fantasía) pueden observarse por el contrario, debidamente matizadas, en *La libertad en el tejado*. (Aznar Soler 2003b, 30)

The focus here will be on how the motif of being unable to have an awoken conscience in life is repeated throughout the play, and how it makes reference to the Calderonian motif of life as dream, primarily shown in La Sonámbula's transformation into La Razón, following her fall. It is important to note a tension here between the deployment of motifs of seminal male Spanish playwrights and the issues around gender and agency that she repeatedly refers to throughout the text. By continuing to refer to established male playwrights she positions herself within the recognized Hispanic theatre canon in an affirmative way, that rejected marginalization:

EL HOMBRE.- Señorita, yo soy un...

LA SONÁMBULA.- Calla, los secretos no se descubren nunca en el primer acto de la vida.

EL HOMBRE.- (*Vencido*) Tiene usted razón.

LA SONÁMBULA.- (*Exaltada*) Razón, esa palabra me viste y calza perfectamente. ¡Razón! ¡Qué buen retrato has hecho! Voy a mirarte bien la frente cargada de razones. (*Le ilumina con el farolito. El joven, reaccionando, le tira el farol en el preciso instante en que un silbido policial rasga la noche. Le acompaña un murmullo sordo de muchedumbre que irá en aumento. Los tres durmientes, despertándose.*) (León 2003b, 136-7)

It is significant that El Hombre recognises her as La Razón, and she undergoes the transformation from La Sonámbula to La Razón just before she dies, making reference to the fact these revelations are unable to be made in the first “act” of life, also making a meta-theatrical allusion to being an act from the play. La Sonámbula shining the light on El Hombre’s face visually reveals this uncovering of the truth. It also triggers the police to become aware of the presence of the hidden ex-prisoner of war on the rooftop because of the light, showing the constant threat under which the inhabitants of the rooftops live, as they continue to be persecuted by the surveillance and the threat of the police. La Sonámbula’s beautiful singing voice is used here to distract the guards, allowing the other characters to hide El Hombre. Following on from this scene, La Sonámbula / Razón criticises those on the rooftops for not having waited for her and engendered a change: “Siempre los hombres están haciendo algo importante en los momentos en que los necesitamos las mujeres. (*A SABELOTODO*) Veo que tu tejado ejerce influencia en el curso de los acontecimientos” (157). The feminist voice of La Sonámbula is very clear here, in contrast to the soporific state of the men who have the power to change their circumstances, but instead choose to remain blind to it. Whilst

she explicitly criticises the men here, there is also a shared responsibility, given that the other inhabitants of the rooftops had all chosen to remain blind to her. This denial of La Sonámbula and her capacity to awake those on the rooftops from their stupor, is shown when Madame Pimentón claims that she is merely another madwoman “otra loca” (158). The denial of La Sonámbula further establishes the sense of doom around her imminent fall and El Hombre’s role in the death of La Sonámbula.

In Act Three La Sonámbula forewarns El hombre of his rejection of her guidance in helping him to confront the trauma of his past: “LA SONÁMBULA.- La razón estaba perdida para el hombre” (184). Given that he is unable to make his testimony, the rotting corpse of La Sonámbula / Razón must be used as a manifestation of the horrors of the past. In the judgement scene of El Hombre, “La Razón” condemns his irresponsible behaviour:

LA RAZÓN.- Sí, tu peligro irresponsable, ese tú capaz de urdir guerras y levantar cataclismos inesperados o teorías.

EL HOMBRE. – (*Arrodillándose ante LA RAZÓN*) ¡Yo! Todo empieza y termina en mí. Todo es mi propiedad y mi delito.
¡Oh, qué delicada labor de recuperación espera a mi alma!

LA RAZÓN.- (*Colocándole la mano sobre la frente*) Sales de la noche más oscura de la Humanidad⁹. (195)

In spite of the damning condemnation of El Hombre, ultimately the end of the play offers some hope for his redemption, shown as he asserts: “Quiero mi

⁹ Footnote from the Manuel Aznar Soler’s republication: En estas palabras de La Razón resuenan los ecos mundanos (“En una noche oscura”) del Cántico espiritual de San Juan de la Cruz.

libertad. [...] Quiero mi libertad integral” (195-6). El Hombre undergoes a transformation from traumatised prisoner of war to an active participant who has dealt with his past, which allows him to act in the present. This is visually manifested as he carries the rotting corpse of La Razón on his shoulders to “awaken” the population and carry out the same process of testimony he has been through.

Whilst the play is concretely set in Madrid and makes reference to Spain’s Civil War, it can also be contextualised within a broader political perspective. The plot undeniably focuses on the domestic atrocities of this frustrated conflict and its aftermath. However, this is very clearly framed within a wider historical and political context of the twentieth century, characterised by multiple world wars and the demise of communism. León explicitly refers to this in the scene below from Act Three, where Madame Pimentón empties news stories from her skirts:

SABELOTODO.- No, no te oyen. El sufrimiento ha pasado de moda. Ahora es la paz, la pequeña paz de los pequeños vientres satisfechos. Todo mete mucho ruido y, sin embargo, ellos duermen desde las butacas de los teatros a las masas de las conferencias internacionales. Si alguna voz se levanta, si alguna sensatez se dice, pronto la ahogan como temerosos de perturbar el sueño de sus negocios individuales. Nadan en salsa de negocios. ¿Cómo han podido taparse los agujeros que les abrieron las balas en los oídos? ¡Ah, eso quisiera yo saber para ser tanto como Dios. ¿Conoces las noticias? Ven, Pimentoncita, hermoso adefesio mío, gran tarasca de la Humanidad, danos a conocer el ruedo de tus faldas.

(Maricastaña se arrodilla y de los ruedos de las sayas de MADAME PIMENTÓN van saliendo abundantes noticias

internacionales de interés inmediato. Por ejemplo: Plan Truman, Ley de Sucesión de Franco, reunión de cancilleres en Moscú, discursos de Wallace, todo mezclado con leves comentarios. Telegramas de Palestina, de Madagascar, del precio de la vida en una ciudad europea, etcétera)

SABELOTODO.- “España: Diez jóvenes, el menor de diecisiete años, han sido condenados a muerte”. *(Todas estas noticias se leerán por los tres personajes rápidamente y con tono de lectura radial, cambiando mucho cuando den el rápido comentario)*

EL HOMBRE.- *(Sobresaltándose)* ¡En España! ¡Oh palabra perdida entre las miles de palabras que brotan de una linotipia! (185-6)

The commentary of the news stories made by Madame Pimentón and Maricastaña highlights their transformation by the end of this play, as they actively engage with their present and past. This criticism of the particular historical period they are living in continues as Sabelotodo argues that “El sufrimiento ha pasado de moda”. Sabelotodo makes a stinging criticism of the passivity of politicians in power and particularly those from the international community. The ideological landscape of the rooftops has moved from an exclusive discussion of Spain’s Civil War and aftermath, to become an international topic of debate. This implicit criticism extends beyond these international leaders to include the audience of the play, and is most clearly depicted as he describes them sleeping in their seats at the theatre, directly referring to the audience with the purpose of the theatre becoming a space in which to awaken political and social change building on the audience as witness. As Sabelotodo describes here these leaders “nadan en salsas de negocio”, drawing a parallel to La Chica and El Muchacho’s description in

Act One of the commercial landscape of Madrid, represented in it being a city full of skyscrapers. León moves the discussion from Spain within a broader international context, evidenced in the international news stories that fall out of her skirts, which make reference to these major news stories of the day. This reaffirms the need to analyse *La libertad*, not only from a Spanish perspective, but also in relation to the wider international context.

Sueño y verdad de Francisco de Goya

According to Aznar Soler, *Sueño* was written in Rome in 1969 (Aznar Soler 2003b, 70)¹⁰ and was the last play to be written by León in exile. It remained unpublished until it was included in Aznar Soler's edition of *Teatro: La libertad en el tejado; Sueño y verdad de Francisco de Goya* (León 2003b). The plot gives an epic biographical account of Goya's life in his complex historical context. It retells his life and career as a painter, from childhood, adolescence and maturity, through to old age, exile and death. A dual temporal perspective is established as Goya tells his story in the present, and is retrospectively narrated by La Gloria who situates him in his historical and cultural context. Of special interest to León is the tension between Goya's "official" status as a painter for the Spanish monarchy and aristocracy, contrasted with his "unofficial" work as a painter of anonymous members of the public. These unofficial paintings chronicled the realities of the normally undocumented suffering endured by the population. The majority of these unofficial paintings are anonymous characters or archetypes who embody the lower strata of Spain's society. In relation to this, León uses the Brechtian distancing effect of anonymising the characters to ensure the audience is prevented from "connecting emotionally with the characters", to "never forget that it is watching a performance" (Morgan 2013, 56). Extensive historical and political descriptions of this turbulent period are carried out in both the stage

¹⁰ If this date is correct then León's play is a precursor of Antonio Buero Vallejo's better known dramatization of Goya's life in *El sueño de la razón* first staged in Madrid in 1970.

directions and the characters dialogue. The epic narrative enacted in the play charts Napoleon's revolution (1787 – 99) and Spain's Peninsular Wars (1808 – 14). This dual perspective of the political parallels between Goya's life and those of Spain's Second Republic and Civil War years are apparent. Aznar Soler (2003b, 67-91) and Vilches de Frutos suggest that Spain's 1823 liberal resistance is used to theatricalise a parallel with those who fought in 1936 during Spain's Civil War. Vilches de Frutos (2012, 455- 77) has argued that León mythologises the historical character of Goya for future generations to be an exemplary figure of "este compromiso con valores igualitarios" (Vilches de Frutos 2012, 463). This first section of the analysis will focus on how León subverts history by questioning the authority of the "official" historical narrator, through the "unofficial" narratives of the general population and female characters in particular.

The play is divided into fourteen scenes and is notable for its extensive length. This structure correlates to *La Gloria*, a character from one of Goya's fresco paintings from 1772 (Vilches de Frutos 2012, 460). Vilches de Frutos (Vilches de Frutos 2012, 466) and Aznar Soler (2003b, 71) have suggested that the play's lengthiness, and the detailed incorporation of music indicate that it was most likely originally conceived of as a radio play. This would also coincide with the fact that, as already noted, León worked for many years writing and producing material, including plays, for radio towards the end of the 1950's in Buenos Aires, at Radio Splendid and Radio el Mundo (Baur 2005, 108). The combination of a large cast and broad political and historical context establishes *Sueño* to be a play of epic proportions. The characters outlined here are not exhaustive, but the intention is to give a sense of the play's enormous scope. There are two main groups of characters that populate *Sueño*, which I have labelled the "official" and the "unofficial". In the "unofficial" camp are anonymous characters, such as: Ciudadanos; Voz; Patriota; Caballero; Mozo; Académico; Actriz; Hombre; Mujer. These unnamed characters embody a political function representing the proletariat of

the *teatro de urgencia* and agit-prop genre. This was a common device used in agit-prop theatre that “turned “characters” into “stereotypes” that schematised some fundamental characteristics of the various social classes” (Cavallo 2001, 26). Other characters that belong to this unofficial narrative but are named include Goya’s parents, childhood friends and his wife Josefa Baye. By contrast the figures of the “official” paintings have clear historical and political roles as members of the monarchy, politicians and aristocracy. These characters include: Napoleon Bonaparte; Ministro; Marquesa; Carlos IV; María Luisa; Jean-François Bourgoing; Edecán. These two group of characters show León’s agit-prop representation of Goya as the conflicted artist of “el pueblo” and her focus on his political intention behind these “unofficial” paintings. Integral to this retelling of Goya are the female characters that foster Goya’s imagination and political conscience, such as La Gloria, the Duquesa de Alba and Josefa Bayeu.

Goya: “official” and “unofficial” portraits

León’s appropriation of Goya as a historical figure centres on a representation of the role of the artist during war. In particular, this is shown in his interest in painting *el pueblo* in his artworks, which could in turn be read as a political act, representing those individuals that usually remain anonymous. Goya has been a figure that Spanish authors have referred to throughout the ages who represents the continuation of artistic agency in difficult social and political circumstances. Spanish authors have repeatedly referred to him as a figure for rethinking issues of history and agency, as seen for example in Buero Vallejo’s *El sueño de la razón* staged in 1970. In this play Vallejo also investigated the tragic nature of Spain’s destiny and of the power of cultural production under political and social repression as a space of agency. a motif that also recurs in León’s use of Goya in her interpretation of Goya. In *Sueño* Goya’s paintings become a mouthpiece for the people and are also important from the perspective of testimony, as they depict the otherwise unchronicled daily violence and terror endured by the population during war. The tension

between Goya's "official" and "unofficial" paintings is an integral aspect of the dialogue of the play. Although Goya is the artist with the imaginative capacity to produce the paintings, León redefines the historical agency of these marginal characters. Indeed, as with *La historia*, it is once again the female characters that reclaim women's unacknowledged contribution to Spanish history.

The social and political conscience manifested through Goya's "unofficial" paintings is made apparent in Act One, which depicts his humble origins to contextualise him as being one of the people. Goya as one of *el pueblo* is an important motif throughout the play, shown as La Gloria states: "No es tan fácil, Francisco de Goya, ser un niño pobre en la España que está mediando su siglo XVIII" (León 2003b, 220). León renders Goya as an artist who, by virtue of his origins, is both a part of and has an ethical conscience for the suffering of *el pueblo*. He is therefore distinguished from those of the "official" narrative; namely the aristocracy, politicians and monarchy of Spain, who by contrast are presented as disengaged from *el pueblo*. This is seen as Goya notes that he wants to depict the lives of the everyday people surrounding him: "GOYA.- A mí me gusta la vida. Sí, me interesa el pueblo. Mas entro en los palacios y veo a la gente que se queda en la puerta" (León 2003b, 223). This need to represent the injustice is further depicted here:

AMIGO.- ¿Qué dices, hombre?

GOYA.- Nada, que ahora que estoy en Madrid veo que la pintura italiana de Giovanni Batista Tiepolo ha cubierto los muros de los palacios reales de nubes rosa, mujeres y angelitos para que los reyes se olviden de las gentes pobres y sucias a las que no se las llama para los bailes sino para la guerra. (León 2003b, 223)

Although he is concerned with the poor and marginalised people, he also relies on the “official” commissions from his patrons to make a living. León foregrounds this conflict to highlight the important role of the artist for enacting an ethical, social and political purpose. The idealised figure of Goya, embodies León’s belief in the power of art as a tool for social and political change, demonstrating that in spite of this play having been written many years after the Civil War it makes reference back to her *teatro de urgencia*. Tsay’s analysis of León’s *Sonríe China* (1958) similarly notes that despite the many years that had passed since Spain’s Civil War, León: “Nunca se olvida de su compromiso político, y sobre todo, con la mujer” (Tsay 2004, 173). This is relevant given that *Sonríe China* was written before *Sueño*, and her trip to China showed her ongoing commitment to Communism. Referring to this later prose text Tsay also depicts León’s sustained preoccupation with “el pueblo” (Tsay 2004, 174). There is a continued stylistic narrative here as the plays written by León embodied the same ideals as those she had previously produced during the Civil War with *guerrillas de teatro*.

Goya’s “unofficial” paintings are used as creative weapons, to reveal the power of artistic testimony in history for the future, compared with the past senseless violence of war. Whilst Spain was at war the battle being fought by Goya was an internal one, with his imagination:

JOSEFA.- ¿Qué estás murmurando, marido?

GOYA.- Nada, nada, que me levanto de la cama y me voy.

JOSEFA.- ¿A la guerra? ¡Vaya marido valiente!

GOYA.- No te rías, Josefa, voy a otra guerra, a la mía particular, porque yo no he nacido para estar sobre mano. Aunque tropiece y no oiga ni las campanas, aunque me caiga y me levante,

pintaré. Sí, los hombres tienen que salir de los charcos donde la vida los mete. Andando, ahora van a ver, todos los que creen que estoy terminado, quién es Francisco de Goya. (León 2003b, 287)

Goya symbolises the potential for an artist to be revolutionary exclusively through the power of imagination. Though this internal battle of Goya's imagination is private, the war that Goya fights is one that has a public end result that depicts the unofficial story of those who remain unremembered but who also suffered and died during the war. León recasts Goya's work through the realm of the private sphere. In doing so, she subverts the "official" public narrative of Goya's life and work, as the circumstances of his domestic life take on greater value. This return to the private in turn becomes a political act, represented through Goya's "unofficial" paintings. It is important to flag a critical distance between León and this play as in her own life she was consistently involved in cultural and political acts of social agency. Of course given that her material circumstances changed throughout exile her perspective on revolutionary ideals was not a fixed one, as can be seen in the different ideological stances she adopts across different texts and stages of her career. As stated by one of the citizens of the town:

PATRIOTA.- Que a mí Goya no me ha retratado nunca.

CIUDADANO I.- Eso se cree usted, pero todos, todos estamos en sus lienzos, en los cartones de los tapices, en los dibujos que hace refunfuñando por la noche con esa manera suya de gritar y de no oírse y de dibujar a voces lo que ve y hasta lo que le queda por ver en las entretelas de su alma. (León 2003b, 326-7)

The revelation of the usually hidden everyday life of the citizens is represented by León as these marginal characters are foregrounded, showing

one of the primary purposes of *Sueño*: to highlight social injustice and inequality. This is also shown in *Sueño* through the many references made to class struggle. One example of this can be seen as a citizen describes the monarchy's detached experience of war:

PATRIOTA.- Así que esas caritas van y vienen. Dan ganas de gritarle: Pero si tú no has conocido más que las alfombras de los palacios, qué me vienes con guerras. Nosotros somos los que morimos. (León 2003b, 321)

The anonymity of the changing face of the monarchs who remain in their palaces is presented here as unjust. Whilst the monarch makes decisions about the nation and sends the population to war, they are decisions made without any lived experience on their part. Despite this, the population is forced to fight in the war; they have no agency in decision-making processes. León's focus on the tragedy of war from the civilian perspective echoes Wilfred Owen's infamous question: "What passing bells for these who die as cattle?" (Owen 1917, accessed June 2015). The epic historical narrative of the play is represented as a class struggle between rich and poor. It therefore further enforces a retelling of the other unofficial narratives of *el pueblo*, revealing historical memory at its centre.

From the perspective of the narrator as a dramatic construct, La Gloria takes agency in documenting Goya's depictions of violence in his artworks, to create the "unofficial" record. This is evidenced in Goya's portrayal of humanity's capacity to commit horrific acts of violence, most clearly evidenced in the description of "Saturno devorando a un hijo" (1819-23):

LA GLORIA.- Goya, en estos momentos, está concluyendo de pintar un horrible Saturno que se lleva hasta su boca monstruosa un hombre desnudo. Se presiente al mirarlo que aún se estremece. Toda la miseria,

toda la frustración humana, todas las desolaciones las ha dejado
Francisco de Goya en ese monstruo.

GOYA.- Pero, ¿por qué los hombres consienten en ser devorados poco a poco? No quiero verlos más. Leocadia, cierra bien las puertas. Que no entre nadie. Para lo que tienen que decirme que yo no sepa... (León 2003b, 380-1)

Goya's painting of Saturn returns to the motif of the violence and destruction of war which depicts the brutality and misery that humanity is able to inflict on itself and Goya's disdain for humanity's propensity towards violence. It also speaks of León's own experience, having witnessed first-hand the mass mechanised civilian death in Spain during the Civil War. There is a further reference to León's life here, given that she famously saved a number of Goya's paintings from the Museo Nacional del Prado during a bombing raid, as recounted in *Memoria* (León 1998, 234) and Alberti's *Noche de guerra en el Museo de Prado* originally published in 1956 (Alberti 2004 & Wheeler 2011, 78). Of central importance to this play is Goya's depiction of humanity allowing itself to be "devoured". This could well relate to León's lived experience of Spain's Civil War and witnessing the outbreak of World War II. It shows the self-conscious space of dramatic resistance created by León that closely mirrors her own lived political and social commitment. In *Sueño* this is created by León through a constant blending of fact and fiction which creates a complex space of reference to her "official" and "unofficial" narratives. Another example of this blurring of the boundaries of fact and fiction in the play can be found in Goya's own exile depicted in the play. This analysis of exile is not confined to Spain, given that, as in the case of *La libertad*, she turns to the universal themes of human suffering and brutality. Not only does it represent the collective narrative of the general population, it also echoes León's experience of exile:

LA GLORIA.- La historia repitiéndose ha llevado, y llevará muchas veces, a los españoles al largo camino del éxodo, así comenzaron los últimos años que había de vivir Francisco de Goya, el que había abierto la puerta del siglo XIX a la pintura universal. (León 2003b, 390-1)

As Goya depicts the unofficial experiences of the population in his paintings, so León retells his biography through an “unofficial” narrative which focuses on his struggle with exile and political persecution. *La Gloria* uses Goya’s exceptional individual narrative as the dramatic vehicle to tell the untold story of *el pueblo*, by charting his humble origins, depicting how he evolved to become one of Spain’s greatest artists. The self-conscious space of the play and its dual political perspective present Goya’s context of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as a mirror to León’s own experiences in the twentieth century. Through Goya, León reflects on her contemporaries’ experience of exile and political persecution. This overlap is especially evident in *La Gloria*’s elegiac depiction of Goya’s death in exile: “Ahora, un refugiado español ha muerto en el destierro. Es uno más de los que van quedando bajo otros soles. ¿Dónde lo enterrarán?” (León 2003b, 403). The question of where to bury Goya shows the complex implication of exile for identity, and belonging is shown as a consequence of how León returns to this question of historical memory. By the end of the play, then, Goya embodies some of these grand themes of Spain; political and social unrest, violence and exile are representative of León’s belief that the artist needs to have a social and political conscience in order to act as a witness for their country.

In *Sueño* the female characters carry out an important role in the life of Goya. The play dramatizes the narratives of the women who worked behind the scenes in his private and domestic sphere, but who remained instrumental to his production of art works. They are essential to León’s fundamental construction of a subversive dramatic space that retells the public sphere through the private. In this retelling, the female characters are fundamental

catalysts for Goya's creativity and yet are shown to have been forgotten by history. As pointed out by Vilches de Frutos, León "presta visibilidad y protagonismo a las mujeres que inmortaliza Goya en sus cuadros" (Vilches de Frutos 2014, 38), and in doing so she: "[...] aboga por romper la invisibilidad a la que la sociedad somete a las mujeres, una denuncia que aparece en múltiples ocasiones en boca de las mujeres tanto aristócratas como del pueblo" (Vilches de Frutos 2014, 38) In spite of this observation an extensive analysis of the role of the female characters in the play has not been fully explored. This analysis will carry out close readings of the characterisation of La Gloria, Josefa and the Duquesa de Alba.

As the narrator of the play, La Gloria serves the function of being the official teller of the unofficial account of Goya's life from an omnipotent and retrospective position. She is a voice of historical agency and of political, social and artistic conscience. She describes the historical epic backdrop of the play, and in doing so emphasises the national collective narrative, and the singularity of Goya's place within this. León's decision to write a female narrator to retell Goya's narrative subverts the convention of male-narrated history. In this sense La Gloria carries out a similar function to the La Sonámbula / Razón character from *La libertad*, who functions as the voice of political and social conscience. La Gloria has two key purposes in the play: she is the voice of history and plays a key role in the plot:

LA GLORIA.- Francisco, yo que soy la Gloria que cuida tu fama, te llevaré de mi mano. No tiembles cuando vuelvas a encontrarte frente a la duquesa de Alba, ella sabe entregarse a los desgraciados mejor que a los felices. ¿No ha tenido en su palacio a los tullidos y a los pobres? ¿No se inclina mejor que ante la reina ante los necesitados de su ayuda? ¿No recuerdas de aquel fraile cojo y tartamudo que recogió, aquella negrita, aquel perro...? Confía en tus ojos, Francisco de Goya. La vida sigue.

Mírala de frente. Todo está en tus manos y en tus ojos. Agarra bien tu oficio. ¿No eres pintor de cámara del rey? ¿No habla contigo como un amigo? ¿No escuchas dentro de tu alma aquel pequeño concierto que para ti dio Carlos IV de España? (León 2003b, 278)

La Gloria describes herself as responsible for ensuring the lasting fame of Goya, and his historical memory, as she is the one “que cuida tu fama, te llevaré de mi mano”. Her steering of Goya’s future has the political intention of reminding him of the importance of his work as the “unofficial” artist and his role in the lives of el pueblo. La Gloria represents his conscience, shown as she urges him, “agarra bien tu oficio”, encouraging him to paint his unofficial canvases. She is an important historical voice and her guidance is essential to Goya’s paintings created as acts of resistance during war. La Gloria encourages Goya to stay committed to his earliest intentions of painting his own social, political and artistic interest: “GOYA.- No, rabio. Pues pintaré y pintaré y repintaré aunque todos los curas se me pongan por delante” (León 2003b, 216). This is later reinforced as she reiterates the importance of Goya staying alert to his political context to continue to paint these unofficial pictures, during the subsequent years of violence, war and terror:

LA GLORIA.- No cerrarás jamás los ojos, Francisco de Goya. Los conservarás bien abiertos porque has de mirar con ellos el mundo de los hombres. Yo te digo que nadie como tú los necesita para guiar tus manos, porque ellas serán las encargadas de dejar a los hombres que vendrán la imagen en colores y líneas de un siglo de España. (219)

It is La Gloria who encourages Goya to act as a witness and chronicler of his time and in doing so to reclaim artistic historical agency over the international eruption of war. Throughout the play there is a repeated reference to the fact

that Goya, fostered by the guiding voice of La Gloria continues to keep his eyes open. This means that as an artist he should be bound to depict the violent reality of what was happening around him. León depicts Goya as an integral narrator of history able to “speak the truth” through the paintings in a way that those in power, namely the politicians and monarchies, were unable to.

Aside from narrating and steering Goya’s purpose as a historical figure, La Gloria also narrates a history of Spain’s social injustice and inequality:

LA GLORIA.- Momentos difíciles para España. Los franceses han saqueado los almacenes catalanes y se han llevado la cosecha. En Valencia los telares no trabajan. En los Pirineos han destruido las fábricas de armas. Los campesinos bajan la cabeza sin comprender por qué el hijo no vuelve. Se agitan los hombres cultos, pero los campesinos no leen. En España los que leen no labran y los que labran no leen. (312)

Once again La Gloria voices the often overlooked narrative of the poor and “campesino” population of Spain and incorporates their narratives within this retelling of Goya’s life. In this extract La Gloria highlights the lack of education in Spain and foregrounds this social issue, focusing on the inequality of the classes. The repeated focus on pedagogy draws another parallel to León’s commitment to using culture, and especially theatre, as an integral aspect of education to improve literacy. In her essay “Teatro de masas” (León 2003a, 379) León describes the important role theatre can carry out against illiteracy:

En Rusia sabían muy bien que el teatro es una fuerza civilizadora. Antes el sesenta por ciento de la población eran analfabetos. Una de las cruzadas del teatro volante ha sido

contribuir con sus representaciones a la liquidación del
analfabetismo. (León 2003a, 379)

She follows this quotation on the pedagogical capacity of the theatre to describe her admiration for the Russian and Soviet theatre, depicted as going beyond an aesthetic movement to one that “atraviesa la primera etapa de una nueva conciencia” (León 2003a, 381). As Aznar Soler reflects, this was an essential aspect of the propagandist purpose of the theatre: “En esta orientación de la cultura el teatro era, sin duda, uno de los medios más idóneos para desarrollar esa necesaria labor de agitación y propaganda” (Aznar Soler 1993, 26). León also references this in *Juego limpio* (2000) where the main protagonist, Camilo, describes joining the Republican army and learning to read. Here León equates learning to read with the positive values of intellectual emancipation: “Saber leer era como vivir por su cuenta, como establecerse en un lugar próspero que daría su fruto” (Aznar Soler 1993, 30). This further establishes the parallel between Goya’s lifetime which, like Spain’s Second Republic, was characterised by major ideological developments, especially in pedagogy, similar to the context of the Enlightenment in Spain. The influence of the enlightenment led to a “process of intellectual change experienced by growing numbers of educated Spaniards from the 1680s onwards” (Deacon 2005, 294). This change is also reflected in the play, shown in the ambassador’s proclamation: “EMBAJADOR.- Sí, sí, las ideas nuevas corren por España a galope largo” (León 2003b, 244). The spokespeople for these changes and the agents of the social and political awakenings of conscience are women. León’s theatre occupies a self-reflexive space, as described by Marcos Ana, precisely because its action was unable to be separated from her life:

La vida y propia obra literaria de María Teresa, ambas
inseparables, demuestran que fue una mujer de convicciones

seriamente asumidas, producto de su gran densidad humana y de un reflexivo sentido de la justicia social. (Ana 1989, 42)

In her retelling of Goya's narrative and through León's focus on these social and political questions, León shows an ongoing commitment to themes that she had started writing about many years earlier in her 1933 play, *Huelga en el puerto* (León 2003a). León affirms that her plays written in exile were intended to be sustained acts of active political resistance, as opposed to dramatizations of memory and melancholia.

Together with La Gloria, Josefa is another important female character who voices many of León's concerns regarding society, injustice and the high rates of illiteracy in Spain. In *Sueño* Josefa adopts the role of the dutiful "wife of" Goya, in a comparable way perhaps to León and Alberti, evidenced in León's claim: "yo quiero ser la cola del cometa" (Ana 1989, 43). Not only does Josefa represent this invisible narrative of Goya's dramatized private life, she also raises the gendered question of social inequality, and the inadequate education in Spain particularly for women:

JOSEFA.- Yo te quiero, Francisco, y te querré mientras aliente.
No sé decírtelo, porque me faltan letras. Apenas me dejaron
aprender a leer. En España, tú lo sabes, a las mujeres gramáticas
se las apalea para que olviden. Francisco, yo seré para ti la que
esperará siempre, la que te lavará las manos cubiertas de
trabajos, la que nada te pedirá a cambio... (León 2003b, 230-1)

Josefa's depiction here of her unconditional love for Goya, being by his side without pretence or agenda, perfectly encapsulates her as a model wife of the time. In spite of this conventional portrayal of Josefa as the quintessential nineteenth century "ángel del hogar" (Nash 1999, 28), she does not have a passive role in the play. Indeed her agency can be seen as she berates the

gender inequality of women's lack of education and their absence from the Spanish canon. In the above speech Josefa describes her inability to fully express her thoughts and feelings because of her illiteracy, stating that: "Apenas me dejaron aprender a leer", which she connects to a larger national problem of the beaten "mujeres gramáticas". Yet in spite of her claim of being unable to voice her thoughts, Josefa contradicts this by using language in an articulate way. Josefa, as with La Gloria, is a voice of historical agency for Goya's conscience as an artist, through her dual roles as dutiful wife and spokesperson against social inequality. Josefa is able to enact both of these roles, rather than simply conform to one or the other. Josefa and her commentaries also highlight León's life-long commitment to feminism and shows how León, even in this final play written in 1969, sought to change women's role in the theatre through her complex characterisations of female characters. As evidenced in Josefa, women are portrayed in ways that move them beyond monolithic stereotypes such as the model wife, instead they occupy multiple identities at the same time.

Within these national narratives of war, León inserts her own portrait of these unchronicled unequal opportunities for women; by describing the life of Goya, she shows again that these "official" narratives were being driven by men. Josefa's illiteracy is referred to later on in the play when she comments on the soldiers leaving for war. In this scene she is depicted as a character with her own agency, and engaged in her contemporary political and social context, while Goya is depicted evermore as the isolated artist, removed from this external reality, following the serious illness that left him deaf around 1792-3:

GOYA.- Mujer, Josefa, ¿qué haces ahí al balcón mirando pasar gente?

JOSEFA.- Francisco, llaman soldados para la guerra.

GOYA.- ¿Qué me dices? Escríbelo aquí.

JOSEFA.- ¡Ay, Dios, qué mal escribo, con eso que decía el cura de que a las mujeres por la letra les entraba el diablo! Pues no entiendo casi nada de esto de escribir. (León 2003b, 286)

Josefa is depicted in the play as instrumental for mobilising Goya's political conscience following his illness precisely through her awareness of her own marginality as a woman with an opinion. León casts her as paramount to Goya's decision to paint some of his most famous works during the later "Pinturas Negras" (1819-23) stage including, of course, 'Saturno devorando a un hijo'. Returning to Goya's work being set in the private sphere, this is physically shown in the frescos he painted on his walls, as opposed to the public canvases. This shows his retreat from the public to the private, from official to unofficial painter. It also reveals the importance of the domestic context, traditionally designated within the female sphere, and which has historically not been deemed to be an important national narrative to be chronicled. In *Sueño*, León repeatedly repudiates this omission of the domestic; presenting it as an equally important context for these epic national official narratives. She reveals Josefa's integral and yet untold role for provoking Goya's conscience, which had culminated in some of his most acclaimed paintings. Goya is depicted as detached from the world, refusing to be involved in the realities happening outside his home. Again, in León's retelling it is Josefa who pushes him to be a more socially committed artist. This is reiterated as she berates his ignorance of the violent realities of war happening around him:

JOSEFA.- ¿Y tampoco te interesa que tus amigos, a los que has dejado retratados en tus cuadros, estén detenidos, presos?

GOYA.- No te entiendo bien. La cabeza vuelve a girarme. No consigo encontrarme.

JOSEFA.- Francisco, el tiempo es el tiempo. Quítate ya el luto. Por mucho que hagas no la vas a resucitar.

GOYA.- ¿Qué dices, mujer?

JOSEFA.- Nada, ahí sube el hijo.

XAVIER.- Padre, padre, escúchame. Deja de pintar a ese Manuel Godoy gordo y panzón. Los ejércitos franceses están entrando en España al mando de Joaquín Murat y el pueblo asalta el palacio de Godoy.

(Tumulto, voces, cargas, puertas rotas, cristales) (León 2003b, 338)

It is Josefa and their son Xavier who persuade Goya to leave his past behind him and be engaged in painting the present day conflicts of his country. They reveal themselves to be his ethical conscience by urging him to distance himself from the corruption of the politicians and encourage him to renounce his role as the official court painter. Josefa has an important role in the play and is represented as the catalyst for Goya's most acclaimed paintings. León highlights that Josefa, as with Leonor Cortinas in *La madre*, had been repeatedly ignored by historical narratives.

Another influential character that León presents as fundamental to Goya's art works is the Duquesa de Alba (María del Pilar Teresa Cayetana de Silva Alvarez de Toledo, 1762 – 1802). La Duquesa moves from being the inanimate model of "La maja vestida" and "La maja desnuda" (1797 – 1800), to become a character in her own right in the play. Rather than being Goya's

silent muse, she is portrayed as a politically engaged and eloquent character in her own right. As was the case with Josefa, León dramatizes the Duquesa as portraying an important role in voicing a political and social conscience, which in turn inspired Goya's art works that portrayed this social injustice. Whilst León often depicts the corrupt power of the aristocracy and ruling class, compared with the inherent innocence of *el pueblo*, by contrast the Duquesa is portrayed as having a strong ethical and social conscience. This is shown as she explicitly criticises the corruption of Manuel Godoy y Álvarez de Faria's rule as Prime Minister of Spain (1792-97 and 1801-08):

DUQUESA DE ALBA.- Me parece como si los estuviera oyendo. En Basilea es muy fácil ceder, pero qué manera de dejar en ridículo a España. ¡Ese Godoy! ¿Sabes, Francisco, que van a dar a Manuel Godoy, por esta genuflexión que ha hecho, el título de Príncipe de la Paz? Y no hablemos de sus grandezas de España, de sus llaves de gentilhombre, de sus veinte veces general y cuarenta mariscales de campo. Es una vergüenza. Yo no dejaré más que me salude.

GOYA.- María Teresa, calla un poco, así no te puedo pintar y justo ahora que te estaba modelando las mejillas. Cállate un momento, mujer.

DUQUESA DE ALBA.- No puedo. ¿No te das cuenta de que ahora los ingleses se pondrán furiosos con nosotros? Ya lo han dicho en Francia: hacen la paz con nosotros para amenazar a Inglaterra: "Hagamos una paz honrosa con alguno de nuestros enemigos y con ayuda de los navíos españoles lancémonos contra la flota de Inglaterra, esa nueva Cartago." (309)

As can be seen in this exchange, Goya resists engaging in a conversation about the political and social realities of Spain. The Duquesa, in a comparable

way to Josefa, urges Goya to confront these realities. León foregrounds women as agents for engendering a political and social conscience, which in turn challenges the complacency of the men in power. As seen in the Duquesa's scathing attack on the hypocrisy and corruption of Godoy, she has the function of being a spokesperson for reason and national consciousness. A parallel between León's political commitments in her own lifetime can be compared to the narratives of these strong politically committed female characters. This biographical overlap is most evident in León's work carried out during the Second Republic and Civil War as previously explained with the *teatro de guerrillas*. It is shown through León's political and military work, primarily in the theatre and as a spokesperson for the Second Republic, described by Rosa Chacel as: "un ejemplar tan perfecto de acción y sacrificio" (Marcos 1989, 42). Women are depicted in León's plays as the drivers for political, social and artistic change through their awakened conscience.

Goya's luxury of being removed from the world and retreating to his imagination not only reflects his artistic single-mindedness, but also the reality of his privileged position in the domestic sphere as a man. Josefa, for instance, is unable to retreat to her imagination because she has to run the household and raise their child. There is a paradox in the public and private sphere, given that Josefa is unable to evade the ramifications of the political and social reality, as Goya does, because of her domestic role. Although she is charged with running the household, Josefa cannot evade the realities of the outside world and of war, because she witnesses the tangible impact on her everyday life. The Duquesa reveals that she is also unable to ignore the realities of corruption and violence because of her political and social conscience. Yet Goya rudely dismisses the Duquesa for talking too much - "Cállate un momento, mujer" - showing that in taking an active and argumentative stance on politics, she had exceeded the limitations placed upon her, exceeding the expected docile woman. In this scene, León also shows the limited roles available to women, and how her female characters exceed these constraints.

Even after the Duquesa's death in the play, she retains an important role in rejuvenating Goya's artistic imagination. This is illustrated as he, in a feverish state after she has died, hallucinates that he is speaking with her and asks:

GOYA.- María Teresa, no sé si te oigo o adivino. ¿Qué me dices?
¿Que yo tengo derecho a pintar la locura? Pues probaré y dejaré con la boca abierta a todos los pintores de la tierra. (*Ríe*) María Teresa, estoy cansado de hacer lo que los demás me mandan [...] ¿Es que no tengo derecho a pintar el sufrimiento del hombre? (289-90).

He invokes the Duquesa as a muse who gives him permission to follow the free reign of his imagination. Although already dead, she is fundamental therefore to Goya's decision to change the focus of his paintings to portray the suffering of the everyday population. The Duquesa is reconfigured in the play to embody Goya's most creative and subversive imagination. As with La Gloria and Josefa, León affords women historical agency, as women are repeatedly characterised as the internal conscience of men, ignoring which has dangerous consequences. Leon's alternative retelling of the official narratives foregrounds women being systematically overlooked by history. The centrality of women's historical agency is reiterated as La Gloria and an anonymous citizen close the play:

LA GLORIA.- Napoleón Bonaparte ha sacrificado por su gloria todos los sueños de libertad del pueblo de Francia. Napoleón se ha coronado emperador.

VOZ FEMENINA.- Por favor, Bonaparte, no te hagas rey. El que te empuja es esa mala persona de Luciano. No le escuches.

LA GLORIA.- Para la Historia de Europa, el que Bonaparte no escuchara la persuasiva voz de Josefina, esposa del primer cónsul, tuvo

consecuencias inesperadas. Entre los reyes destronados está el de Nápoles, hermano de Carlos IV de España. ¿Por qué quiere ser emperador si es Napoleón?, dice la gente. Beethoven tachó la dedicatoria de su tercera sinfonía, (*Música*) escribiendo al frente de ella: “Sinfonía Heroica para celebrar el recuerdo de un gran hombre”. Sí, Europa tiembla y el rey Carlos IV se pregunta en su palacio de Madrid. (333)

As the corruption of Bonaparte and Manuel Godoy become increasingly clear, it is a powerful female voice, and, in this exchange, an anonymous one, that embodies the voice of conscience to criticise this misuse of power. *La Gloria* shows that Bonaparte’s downfall came from not heeding the advice of his wife, Joséphine de Beauharnais, another voice of political and social conscience. The collapse of the socialist project of the French Revolution is dramatized to lament the corruption of revolutionary ideals in the downfall of Bonaparte. That it is consistently the female characters who voice this political and social conscience is deliberate and symbolises their historical agency in the play.

This chapter has focused on the following plays written by León whilst living in exile in Buenos Aires, Argentina and Rome, Italy: *La historia de mi corazón* (1950s); *La madre infatigable* (1940s); *La libertad en el tejado* (1947 and 1948); *Sueño y verdad de Francisco de Goya* (1969). The close readings are contextualised in relation to the plays León had written earlier on in her career during Spain’s avant-garde, particularly her involvement in the *Guerrillas del teatro* and *teatro de urgencia*. Across these readings what is clear is León’s sustained commitment to theatre as a means of engendering social and political change. It also explored the significance of intertextual references to other aspects of her writing, including her essays and autobiographies. The next chapter will go on to explore the plays written by Lejárraga in exile.

Chapter Three: María Lejárraga

Introduction

On the 30th March 1950 María Lejárraga sent a letter to her American translator, Collice Portnoff, describing her disappointment at having had the publication of her autobiography, in *Una mujer por caminos de España*, rejected by Underhill publishers. This was on account of it not meeting “the public taste”, although it was later published in 1952. Following this rejection Lejárraga wrote in English: ‘I’ll try, of course, like a good child when I’ll be told, but in the meantime I must live and repay you... so I think we must turn to the theatre and cinema for a more immediate result’ (Blanco 2002, 185-6). Lejárraga’s return to playwriting at this late stage in her life, having not written for the theatre for many decades, was partly driven by economic necessity. Following this statement from 1950, Lejárraga subsequently published *Viajes de una gota de agua* (Martínez Sierra, 1954) and originally in 1960 *Fiesta en el Olimpo y otras diversiones menos olímpicas* (Martínez Sierra, 2009). This collection included *Televisión sin pantalla* (Martínez Sierra, 2009) and whilst it was published in 2003, *El cobarde* is estimated as having been written in the 1950-60s (O’Connor 2003, 11). Since these original publication dates, there have also been two re-editions of the Fiesta collection, first edited by Pérez-Rasilla (1996) and secondly by Sastre and Vizcarra (2009). Although these plays were republished, they remain unperformed. One likely explanation for this is the cultural and historical anomalies of the collection, given that, despite the plays being published in Buenos Aires in 1954 and 1960, they structurally and thematically comprise of many references to Spanish theatre of the avant-garde and the Golden Age. They reference the conventions of the theatrical tradition with which *Lejárraga* had previously experienced great commercial success, whilst writing under the collaborative Gregorio Martínez Sierra pseudonym. Although Lejárraga had expected that writing for theatre and film would have a more immediate result, in fact it took a decade for her two play collections to even be published. This

was not the fast-paced turnover of writing and staging plays that Lejárraga had experienced earlier on in her life whilst writing under the pseudonym. An ironic tone is taken in the prologues to the plays, as Lejárraga describes the unlikelihood of them being performed. She shows this by creating a playful rapport between the reader and the narrator especially in the prologues to *Tragedia de la perra vida*, *El amor vuela*, *Es así* and *Televisión sin pantalla*. Similarly, experimental strategies are also deployed in a selection of plays from *Fiesta*, which include *Tragedia de la perra vida*; *Sueños en la venta*; *Muerte de la locura*. The order of texts in the *Fiesta* collection begins with the most conventionally structured plays and then moves to more experimental works. This is seen in the opening one-act play, *Tragedia* and the three-act plays: *Es así*, *El amor vuela*, *El buen tirano*. The recognisable structures of these plays are very different to the final four texts, which are much more representative of what Lejárraga termed the miscellaneous “diversidad” of the collection (Martínez Sierra 2009, 74). These last four plays are much shorter and almost all of them include elements of music, dance, ballet, and are narrated through gesture and movement, as indicated in the stage directions.

Following the death of her husband Gregorio Martínez Sierra in September 1947, Lejárraga began to publish under her married name “María Martínez Sierra”. Whilst this pseudonym was known for its commercial success across a range of genres, particularly in the theatre, her married name “María Martínez Sierra” and maiden name “María de la O’ Lejárraga” were unknown to the majority of readers and publishers alike. The tensions around this pseudonym, and the extent to which Lejárraga herself had authored these texts have attracted much critical interest following the publication of Patricia O’Connor’s book *Gregorio and María Martínez Sierra* (1977) and numerous subsequent articles on the topic (O’Connor 1975; 1977; 1978; 1996; 2000; 2003; 2008). This work has played a crucial role in shedding light on the collaborative nature of the “Gregorio Martínez Sierra” pseudonym. Likewise, Checa Puerta’s work on their theatre has been fundamental in establishing that

Gregorio and María wrote in letters about the collaborative nature of their work. It remains difficult to establish exactly the extent to which Lejárraga had been the primary author of these texts (Checa Puerta 1998, 230), although two authors writing under a single pseudonym was a common convention in Madrid at this time (Checa Puerta 1998, 231). Whilst this question of the pseudonym and the earlier plays published under it has received much scholarly attention, those plays subsequently published under Lejárraga's married name have received significantly less criticism. This is surprising given that these later plays are integrally connected to Lejárraga's move towards an authorial reclamation of her name, as she began publishing for the first time under her married name. Alda Blanco contextualises this in relation to her autobiographical texts:

[...] fue la acertada combinación de los textos dramáticos escritos por María y las brillantes e innovadoras puestas en escena de Gregorio lo que, por fin sitúa la producción teatral de "Gregorio Martínez Sierra" entre el teatro más importante de la época. Sin embargo e inesperadamente, en 1932 "Gregorio Martínez Sierra" cae en el silencio del cual nunca volverá a salir. En 1952 resurge la voz literaria de María con la publicación en México de la bellísima autobiografía, *Una mujer por caminos de España*, pero ahora esta voz viene acompañada de un nuevo nombre: María Martínez Sierra. (Blanco 1999, 18)

The connection between these autobiographical texts, *Una mujer por caminos de España* (1952) (Martínez Sierra 1952; 1989) and *Gregorio y yo* (1953) (Martínez Sierra 2000), and the *Fiesta* collection has a chronological logic, given that they were all written just a few years after Gregorio's death, and under "María Martínez Sierra". Lejárraga's move to publish these autobiographical texts for the first time under her own name was also born out of necessity, given that she could no longer publish under the pseudonym.

Following Gregorio's death she had lost a name that encapsulated the prestige of a commercially successful and established author across numerous genres and an established readership. She pointed out the deep irony of the position she found herself in following Gregorio's death in another letter to María Lacrampe sent in 1948, about having to resurrect an unknown name: "por el momento me tiene tan contenta haber vuelto a ver y poder trabajar, que no me dejo entristecer demasiado por la situación paradójica en que me encuentro de haber muerto en vida y tener que resucitar para seguir viviendo" (Blanco 2002, 176). The economic necessity of "re-launching" her name, also had an ostensibly positive consequence given that it also afforded her the freedom of being liberated from the commercial expectations of the pseudonym. It is the experimental nature of her plays that is of special interest in this close reading.

Publishing under her married name in her autobiographies and plays marks these years following 1947 as a transformational moment for her authorial recuperation. The reestablishment of her name is inherently connected to her life's commitment to literature as a tool for emancipation. The *Fiesta* collection in turn becomes the platform through which Lejárraga publically reveals herself as a playwright for the first time under her own name. The experimental and playful subversion of theatrical conventions is therefore intertwined with the authorial recuperation of her name, María Martínez Sierra. This manifests itself through the incorporation of the tension between Lejárraga's lived experience as an author and fictional narrator, culminating in the creation of a self-conscious theatrical space. Inter-textual references are made to earlier dramatic conventions written during the modernist period and in Golden Age theatre. She creates a subversive dramatic tension by using these past theatrical conventions in her plays written in exile. Central to this public reclaiming of her authorial voice is an experimental use of game play and subversion in her playwriting, to create an affirmative space of theatrical resistance.

Lejárraga wrote at various points in her life about the relationship between the author and the text, and the creative process of writing. In her autobiographical texts she describes becoming a spectator of her life by writing about it. As noted by Sastre and Vizcarra (Sastre & Vizcarra 2009, 43-5), in *Gregorio y yo* she describes an inability to distinguish between being a writerly spectator or an active participant of her life:

Con más precisión, en *Gregorio y yo*, al recordar al estreno de *Canción de cuna*, se refería a que su actitud vital, su papel “ha sido siempre, no tanto por voluntad cuanto por constitución mental, el de mirar la vida desde fuera. Siempre he asistido como espectadora a mis propios conflictos y gracias a un peculiar desdoblamiento de todas mis actividades me parecen ejecutadas por otra persona [...]”; soy mi propio espectador y mi propio fantasma...”. Así, pues, como ella puso en práctica siempre, todos podemos ser, a la vez que contempladores del vivir ajeno, espectadores de nuestra propia existencia. Este distanciamiento, este ver la vida como un espectáculo, es lo que nos hace más tolerable, más alegre. (Sastre & Vizcarra 2009, 44)

Lejárraga’s depiction of her life as a “peculiar desdoblamiento” shows the distancing effect of retrospectively writing about her life in her autobiographies. The line between reality and fiction becomes unclear, given that her past self and actions appear to have been carried out by a fictional character: “ejecutadas por otra persona”, that renders her both a spectator and a ghost of her past. As described by Sastre and Vizcarra this is a motif that can be found across all of her writing:

No se trata de una formulación trivial ni de una simple pose estética. Es, más bien, toda una filosofía de vida lo que hay

detrás de esta concepción de María Martínez Sierra, que ella puso en práctica a lo largo de su dilatada existencia. (Sastre & Vizcarra 2009, 43)

In *Una mujer por caminos de España*, she depicts her autobiography as: “precisamente, lo contrario de una autobiografía, puesto que en ellas, lo mismo que en los años que las inspiraran, paso de ser la protagonista de mi propio vivir a ser espectadora del vivir ajeno” (Sastre & Vizcarra 2009, 43). Lejárraga proposes the existential duality of existence, whereby we can be both an external spectator and a protagonist of our own lives. It is precisely in this space, between being a spectator and a participant, that life can be pleasurable seen as an “espectáculo”. Sastre and Vizcarra describe these comments made by Lejárraga as portraying an existential belief that as witnesses of our own lives, we also become spectators of our existence:

Así, pues, como ella puso en práctica siempre, todos podemos ser, a la vez que contempladores del vivir ajeno, espectadores de nuestra propia existencia. Este distanciamiento, este ver la vida como un espectáculo, es lo que nos la hace más tolerable, más alegre. (Sastre & Vizcarra 2009, 43-5)

Blanco also refers to the self-conscious awareness often found in Lejárraga’s plays, describing it as representing that Lejárraga “con sentido autocrítico, era consciente de la frivolidad de algunos de sus trabajos” (Blanco 2005, 329).

Exposing the pleasure of the critical space between the narrator and reader is essential to Lejárraga’s plays. As previously outlined in the Introduction, a parallel can be drawn here between Iser’s concept of the reader becoming an actor through the reading process: “Staging oneself as someone else is a source of aesthetic pleasure; it is also the means whereby representation is transferred from text to reader” (Iser 1989, 244). In a similar

way, Lejárraga dramatizes this self-conscious gap, particularly in her prologues, by using meta-theatrical devices to enhance the performative space of the reader, and in doing so to replicate something of the live experience of watching a play whilst they read it. She incorporates this pleasure of a critical tension for the reader by breaking the fourth wall, to make explicit that the reader is also an actor in the text. Lejárraga, explicitly conceptualises this “source of aesthetic pleasure”, of the fundamentally performative process of the imagination in the creative act of representation being transferred from the text to the reader. Not only does this create a playful, self-conscious theatrical space, but it also breaks the fourth wall, so to speak, by as is characteristic of Golden Age theatre: “reaching out to the spectator who is burdened with some responsibility of interpretation” (Thacker 2002, 2). One key way she does this is by dramatizing the narrator to create a first person and playful rapport with the reader. In this dramatization of the narrator she incorporates elements of the Baroque and avant-garde period. Lejárraga creates a critical space between the narrator and the reader, and this is especially playful and apparent in the prologues to the plays. In the prologues she confronts the reader with the fictional nature of their position in the collection and breaks a cathartic response. When referring here to breaking the fourth wall the focus is on the way Lejárraga ruptures the readers’ catharsis to create a self-conscious space for them in her plays. Lejárraga’s playful and experimental rapport is fundamentally connected to her lived experience as a female writer occupying a self-consciously marginal space.

Lejárraga’s gender and the marginal space she occupied as a result of being a woman are central to the experimental nature of the plays. Through the narrator she creates a fictionalised dramatization of herself, a peripheral author, directly addressing the reader. Although during the avant-garde Lejárraga wrote prolifically for the theatre, during the Civil War her work as a

political activist for the Socialist Party¹¹ meant her writing (outside political essays and speeches) were side-lined. Her later disillusionment with politics was due to her work never being officially recognised by the party and their decision to cut contact with her in the early years of exile (Sastre & Vizcarra 2009, 21-22). By contrast, her return to playwriting signals an affirmative act of resistance and the recuperation of her authorial name. Rather than a melancholic response to exile, in a comparable way to Méndez and León, Lejárraga's plays are subversive in their experimental nature. Likewise, the intention of performing the plays subverts the conventional gendered codes of private and public space. Not only does she reclaim her authorial name, she also inscribes herself into the public arena as shown in the underlying performative qualities of her plays. Lejárraga, as with Méndez and León, therefore publically transgresses "the notion that women's ambitions had to be exclusively limited to home and family" (Johnson 2003, 11). Her choice of a playful and experimental rapport with the reader creates a self-conscious space for the reader, who is prevented from having a cathartic response and acknowledges that they, as a form of actor, are also agents in the text. This tension is created through the incorporation of a variety of dramatic devices, such as the unreliable narrator, meta-theatre and combining numerous genres. Experimenting with genres was a lifelong preoccupation for Lejárraga, who had earlier played a fundamental role in the literary scene of Spain's Modernist period. In recent years critics have further unearthed Lejárraga's vital role during Spain's avant-garde:

¹¹ For more detailed summaries of Lejárraga's political career and exile see: Juan Aguilera Sastre & Isabel Lizarraga Vizcarra. 2009. "Introducción". *Tragedia de la perra vida y otras diversiones*, pp. 17-27. Alda Blanco has also written a number of articles on the topic: Alda Blanco. 2003. "María Martínez Sierra: Figura política y literaria." *Estreno Cuadernos del teatro español contemporáneo XXIX* (1): 4-9; Alda, Blanco. 2001. "María Martínez Sierra: Feminismo y Exilio." In *El Exilio Literario de 1939*, 359-73. Logroño: Universidad de La Rioja; Alda, Blanco. 2007. "Desde La Pared de Vidirio Hasta La Otra Orilla: El Exilio de María Martínez Sierra." In *Mirrors and Echoes: Women's Writing in Twentieth-Century Spain*, 79-92. Berkeley: University of California Press. Finally also see: Juan Aguilera Sastre. 2001. "La obra literaria en el exilio de María Martínez Sierra. Un texto dramático inédito." In *El exilio literario de 1939*, 459-91. Logroño: Universidad de La Rioja.

Según Ricardo Gullón: “no es posible escribir la historia del Modernismo literario español sin tener presente la persona y obra de Gregorio Martínez Sierra y, junto a él, la de su mujer y colaboradora María de la O Lejárraga García”. [...] En 1903 fundaron *Helios*, la revista clave del modernismo español, con la que los modernistas tenían su propio órgano de expresión, estableciendo un intercambio con revistas extranjeras, francesas sobre todo, y con una idea fundamental, la belleza como concepto supremo. Con Gregorio y María colaboraron Pedro González-Blanco, gran amigo de María y uno de los primeros en defender su autoría en las obras firmadas por Gregorio, Ramón Pérez de Ayala y por encima de todo Juan Ramón Jiménez, alma de la revista, amigo íntimo del matrimonio y confidente de María, al igual que Manuel de Falla. (González Peña 2009, 26-7)

The importance of *Helios* for the development of literature during Spain’s avant-garde period is also outlined by Antonina Rodrigo, who states that:

Desde el punto de vista puramente literario, es *Helios* la más importante sin duda alguna; es la revista clave del Modernismo — en su más estricta acepción de movimiento poético — en el momento de su triunfo en España. (Rodrigo 1995, 44).

As one of the prestigious founders and contributors of this influential magazine, Lejárraga was very much at the centre of Spain’s intellectual and artistic avant-garde. However, her individual position in this group was rendered marginal because she was a woman. This is evidenced in the fact that she had not being publically recognised into this space creatively or intellectually in the pseudonym (O’Connor 1978). Lejárraga dramatizes this

in her plays, given that there are many instances in her plays when women transcend the corporeal and creative boundaries of their gender. Lejárraga subverts the boundaries of the private and public by combining genres, such as ballet and modernist Spanish theatrical elements. Whilst Lejárraga hails from an earlier generation to Concha Méndez and María Teresa León, one element that connects these writers is an interest in experimentation and playfulness as a means of emancipation.

Lejárraga's lifelong interest in formal innovation has its roots in the work she carried out during the avant-garde period. Her position at the margin of the movement can be explored in relation to comments made by Lejárraga on the writing of Emilia Pardo Bazán. Susan Kirkpatrick reflects on Lejárraga's praise of Bazán's writing, which she attributes directly to her gender as a female writer who is "siempre flexible y sabia, ha sabido ondular bajo los nuevos soles" (Kirkpatrick 2003, 142):

[...] es repito, un triunfo de mujer; de alma que no sabe arrugarse... de paladar goloso por toda novedad, de frivolidad triunfadora, bendita, omnipotente; de espíritu con alas y ojos de mariposa, de manos blancas de mujer, que como no pueden endurecerse, están siempre dispuestas a la caricia nueva...; de fecundidad, don de hembra... El arte de los hombres maduros se trueca en serio y doctrinal...: este arte de mujer conserva la abrileña lozanía, sabe a pámpano tierno y a fresa temprana; es fuerte, es atrevido, porque es fuerte...; y— gran revelación de un gran misterio! — escasamente sentimental (Kirkpatrick 2003, 149)

Her description of Pardo Bazán's writing suggests that it is more creative because it does not conform to literary conventions. She praises traits normally associated with negative characteristics, such as frivolous subject

matter, and refusal to be confined to the literary models of her male contemporaries. In breaking with the existing forms, Lejárraga suggests that Pardo Bazán's work makes more of a contribution to literature because it is experimental. Lejárraga depicts this not only in these positive comments regarding Pardo Bazán's literary style, but also corporeally inserts Pardo Bazán into the analysis, describing the white female hands, and the soul unable to be wrinkled, physically recalling the "don de hembra". In this depiction of her writing, the female author creatively, intellectually and corporeally occupies the space of her writing. This is resonant with Lejárraga's *Fiesta* collection, and the way she strategically plays with the position of the narrator in the text, who also subverts these codes and conventions by inserting herself within the plays. Kirkpatrick uses the above quotation to illustrate a wider point about the significance of Lejárraga's position within the wider theoretical framework of gender and modernity. The corporeal biological sense of woman as a child bearer is also connected to the creative ability of women as authors, and their natural propensity for imaginative creativity as authors. The powerful image of woman as natural Creator posits her gender as a site of strength rather than weakness. Using Pardo Bazán as an embodiment of modernity, she redefines the typically sexist negative female traits attributed to women (frivolity, weakness, superficiality, irrationality), to become subversively the positive characteristics of creativity and productivity.

Lejárraga's depiction of Pardo Bazán as an exemplary modernist writer and the potentially subversive position of women's writing is another important element of her theatre. In the *Tragedia* collection, this image of woman as irreverent creator is incorporated in the text of the plays. There are many instances in Lejárraga's plays where women transcend their corporeal and creative limits. One of the most subversive ways by which Lejárraga explores this concept is by representing woman as voracious creator thus making reference to herself as a writer. This is evidenced in her transgression

of generic conventions by incorporating aspects of dance, movement and music particularly evident in her “fantasías líricas”, found at the end of the *Fiesta* collection. This self-conscious space of Lejárraga as an author will be analysed firstly in the general prologue and prologue to *Tragedia de la perra vida*.

Tragedia de la perra vida

In *Tragedia* Lejárraga recreates something of the live experience of performance, through the “espectáculo” of reading. This is achieved by incorporating performative elements which directly address the reader, and create a dramatization of reading the collection. The theatricalisation of this experience is also an important part of Lejárraga’s authorial reclaiming of her published name. She incorporates an ironic and self-referential narrator in order to negotiate her own position as a female author on the margins of a theatrical and intellectual elite. A playful dramatic strategy is shown as the narrator blurs the line between the fictional construct of the narrator and the author herself. The prologues of the collection are used by the narrator to show the blurred lines between fiction and non-fiction and to create a critical distance between the narrator and reader. In the collection there is a general prologue “Prólogo a la primera edición de *Fiesta en el Olimpo* (1960)” (Martínez Sierra 2009, 73-6) and then three more plays: “Hablando con el lector” (Martínez Sierra 2009, 76-9) and “Explicación preliminar” (Martínez Sierra 2009, 79-81) (preface to *Tragedia de la perra vida*); “Hablando con el lector” (Martínez Sierra 2009, 105-110) (preface to *El amor vuela, farsa con coros, en seis cuadros*); “Diálogo de la autora con un lector amigo de poner los puntos sobre las íes” (Martínez Sierra 2009, 187-192) (preface to *Es así: Comedia Dramática “a la antigua”, en tres actos y en prosa*). In these prologues Lejárraga dramatizes the act of writing, and central to this relationship is the critical distance between the text and the performance. Lejárraga capitalises on this tension to create an ironic distance for the reader.

This was an important feature of the theatre written during Spain's avant-garde:

Si aceptamos con Henri Gouhier que el teatro es un “arte en dos tiempos” – el de la creación en el momento de la concepción y escritura del texto y el de la “recreación” en el momento de su montaje y representación en el espacio escénico-, nos encontramos con que el cuadro de relaciones posibles entre el *texto-teatro* (el concebido y escrito para ser representado) y el *texto-espectáculo* (el realizado en la representación) puede estar determinado por la concordancia o discordancia entre los códigos teatrales que organizan ambos textos. (Gabriele 1994, 26)

Central to Lejárraga's prologues is the revelation of this distance between the text and performance, to create a critical readership. It is also a way of playfully acknowledging the expected lack of performance, from within the conventions of the vanguardia.

Lejárraga opens the *Fiesta* collection by directly addressing the readership, creating the first person rapport. This need to engage directly with the audience has a root in Lejárraga's work as an orator, evidenced in her powerful delivery of campaign speeches during her years in politics. One example of this is an elections rally in Asturias in 1936. In Blanco's description of Lejárraga's speeches she describes her tactics for gaining the attention of her audience, whereby she: “explains to her readers that in order to really know who she was and what she was really saying she had to look into her audience's eyes, as if gazing into a mirror” (Blanco 1986, 431). This strategy for her speeches is also used in her direct address to the reader of her plays through the dramatized figure of the narrator. The narrator depicts herself as humble, describing her indebtedness to the reader:

¡Ay, amigo! que apenas he acabado de agradecer, cuando me echo a temblar, preguntándome: ¿Cumplirán estas páginas la tácita promesa que hice al lanzarlas al mercado o decepcionarán a quien sin conocerme, fió en mí hasta el punto de gastar su dinero en adquirirlas?

Tal es el terror que me causa la idea de tu posible desencanto, que, apenas entreabierta la puerta, yo misma la cierro y, en el umbral, empiezo a hablar sin ton ni son para retrasar el momento en que has de entrar en la humilde morada.

¿Por qué te sobrecoge ese temor a ti que tantos libros has lanzado al mundo con serenidad despreocupada? Procede acaso de una observación que alguien que bien me quiere formulara al reparar el índice: “¿No le parece que este libro pudiera ser desconcertante por su... — buscó una palabra que no me molestase, y acabó por decir —: diversidad?”

Pero había querido decir “incoherencia”. Y, antes de que pases adelante lector, quiero, para tranquilidad tuya y mía, poner sobre este punto, las cosas en claro.

Fiesta en el olimpo no es una novela, ni un libro de versos, ni una colección de cuentos o de ensayos: es la reunión de varios trabajos que, diferentes por la forma, están íntimamente unidos por la especie. La especie o familia a que todos ellos pertenecen es la grande, antiquísima y muy noble familia del Espectáculo. (Martínez Sierra 2009, 73-4)

She dramatizes the imagined moment the reader buys the text, describing her play as a commercial product being brought, and speculates whether it would

be able to fulfil “la tácita promesa que hice al lanzarlas al Mercado”. Opening with this very material focus, she immediately addresses the question of whether the reader will feel they have made a worthwhile investment in buying the book. She describes her collection as a commercial product that would be judged from the perspective of being a worthwhile transaction. In this way, Lejárraga directly discusses the readers who have taken the gamble of buying the book, given the obscurity of the name, María Martínez Sierra, at the time of publication in 1960 in Buenos Aires. Reading the collection is depicted as being synonymous with walking across a threshold, which also gives a physical visualisation of the process. The narrator depicts the prologue as a threshold, in which the reader is given a long preamble before being allowed into the “humilde morada”. The experience of reading the collection is likened here to the narrator letting the reader pass into the usually private sphere of her home, and in doing so reveals the performative nature of the text.

The narrator describes her fear that the reader would dislike her book. This can be seen as she shows her concern that they would find the plays incoherent because of the variety of genres included in the single collection. The narrator suggests that this would result in the reader forming a similar opinion to the anonymous critic, “alguien que bien me quiere”, whose criticism of the book is given in the Introduction. This is evidenced as she reports that the critic of her book had described it as: “desconcertante por su... [...] diversidad”, a negative interpretation of the play suggesting that it is characterised by its “incoherencia”. The narrator then addresses this variety of genres, registers and styles of plays. In doing so she anticipates the reader’s response of wanting to neatly define the genre of works, and the collection as a whole, within the expected conventions of existing theatrical genres. Lejárraga refers back to the use of diverse genres she had written under the “Gregorio Martínez Sierra” pseudonym. As analysed by Checa Puerta, these genres were varied and included: “las farsas; el juguete cómico; el sainete; el

drama, la tragicomedia y la tragedia; opereta y espectáculos combinados” (Checa Puerta 1998). Although the narrator begins with a conventionally modernist address to the reader, characterised by the humility and subservience of the prologue, the tone changes to reveal one that challenges these earlier conventions of interacting with audiences. Lejárraga playfully experiments with the avant-garde Spanish theatre conventions to create critical distance for the reader. Many parallels can be drawn between the plays in the collection and the definition of the “Teatro de Vanguardia” from *Diccionario del Teatro Iberoamericano*:

Si a todo ello añadimos que casi todos los dramaturgos de vanguardia coinciden en darnos una visión pesimista y amarga de la condición humana, hereda directamente del existencialismo, no ha de extrañarnos que por parte de muchos críticos se hable del Teatro de Vanguardia como de la manifestación trágica de los tiempos modernos. En todo caso el Teatro de Vanguardia ha cumplido una misión renovadora de extraordinaria importancia. En primer lugar, por haber introducido e impuesto una revolución total servidumbre del realismo como estética, de la intriga convencional como dinámica y de la psicología como resorte escénico el espectáculo deja de ser una rutina esperada para convertirse en una ceremonia insólita y provocadora cargada de una eficacia dramática mucho más violenta. (Fuente Ballesteros & Amezúa 2002, 360)

Similarly, central to all of Lejárraga’s plays is a rejection of realism so that in the particular case of these plays she forces the reader into a critical position, rather than a cathartic experience. Lejárraga’s focus throughout the collection on the conflicted and essentially tragic human condition further reveals an existential anxiety which was characteristic of the avant-garde. At both an

aesthetic and thematic level, then, Lejárraga's plays clearly incorporate many elements of this earlier tradition.

Her depiction of the plays as not being able to be categorised in any one genre shows how she experiments with avant-garde theatrical forms from a position of exile many decades later in Buenos Aires. As she states: "*Fiesta en el olimpo* no es una novela, ni un libro de libro de versos, ni una colección de cuentos o de ensayos". She proposes that the collection is an amalgamation of genres connected by belonging to the same "species or family" under the umbrella term of "espectáculo" or performance, later referred to in the prologue using the American term "show" (Martínez Sierra 2009, 74). Lejárraga foregrounds her experimental incorporation of genre conventions in new and entertaining ways for the reader. The narrator builds anticipation and expectation to mimic what an audience would experience prior to a live performance. As she outlines in her prologue to the collection, "Prólogo a la primera edición de *Fiesta en el Olimpo* (1960)" (Martínez Sierra 2009, 73-6), she does not classify her writing exclusively according to any one genre. Her refusal to conform to fit solely within the conventions of a genre is subversive because it shows how she reasserts her authorial identity by dominating this conversation, whilst suggesting that all of the plays are connected under the more general umbrella term of "performance". Although the narrator begins by stating her concern about not fulfilling the readers' expectations when they bought the book, she ends by openly flouting their rules.

Lejárraga reaffirms her authorial ownership over the "incoherencia" of the plays, by showing the logic of incorporating many different theatrical genres. She argues that these plays could not be measured by the same criteria as a novel or set of essays, precisely because they pertain to: "la grande, antiquísima y muy noble familia del Espectáculo" (Martínez Sierra 2009, 74). The general prologue to the collection is also an important space in which she outlines some essential ideas around her theory of the theatre and its function

and purpose. In laying down this argument, Lejárraga describes her own concept of the theatre and its purpose:

El espectáculo que ahora, por seguir la moda del norteamericanismo, vamos acostumbrándonos a llamar Show, es una de las necesidades fundamentales del ser humano. Sin espectáculo no podemos vivir espiritualmente, como no podemos subsistir materialmente sin alimento. La vida es, por lo menos en las dos terceras partes de su duración, triste, amarga o difícil para todos nosotros, y tediosa para la mayoría que no tienen la imaginación suficiente para crearse una diversión interior. (Martínez Sierra 2009, 74 .)

She describes the need to see theatre as a fundamental aspect of the human condition, depicting a theatrical performance as a spiritual necessity that humanity is unable to live without. Performance is depicted as necessary, because humanity can have recourse to it in the face of sadness, bitterness or difficulty and is especially important for those with less of an imagination. “Espectáculo”, she claims, is necessary to distract the audience and to live a shared moment together. Watching a performance or show is similar to a shared imaginative self-conscious space which the public can use as a distraction from their own lives. This relates to her plays being a space of reflection to discuss the purpose of the theatre through her prologues, using the critical distance established by the narrator. Lejárraga’s use of meta-theatre, or “theatre pieces about life seen as already theatricalized” (Abel 1963, 60), makes reference to Golden Age theatre. In particular, it relates to Calderón’s *El gran teatro del mundo* (Calderón 1980, 363- 440) and the belief that life itself is a stage: “es representación la humana vida, / una comedia sea” (Calderón 1980, 375, stanzas 46-7). In the prologue Lejárraga further develops this concept of life as spectacle, by relating it to our imaginative

capacity as children. She brings to the fore a child's natural development of performance and comedy:

En cuanto el niño empieza a tener leve conciencia de que está viviendo, comienza a representar comedias, no por mentir ni para engañar a nadie, sino sencillamente por divertirse. Casi todos sus juegos son para él acción y espectáculo, lo cual equivale a decir que cuando juega es actor y espectador al mismo tiempo. (Martínez Sierra 2009, 74)

This greater self-awareness links performance to the natural pedagogical development of a child, including the need to be entertained, as Lejárraga discusses the critical gap for the reader, to both observe and participate in this performance. The dual necessity results in the child being both the actor and spectator. Her observation of a child developing self-awareness and a natural inclination towards performance further builds on this concept of “espectáculo”, reinforcing the necessity of the readers' participation in the reading process, in order to experience the critical distance of being engaged in the text. Her fictionalisation of the rapport between the reader and the narrator refers back to a much older convention of *Manierismo* from the Baroque period. In this genre the prologues are necessary for developing the “espectáculo”, and highlight the fictional and dramatized relationship between the reader and narrator as a performative strategy. There is a clear cross over between some of these key aspects of the convention and those also deployed in Lejárraga's collection of plays:

El Manierismo gusta de crear un ambiente de ficcionalidad en torno a la obra literaria o de recordad al espectador este *ficcionalidad*. ¿Qué mejor instrumento literario que el prólogo, que es el vehículo manejado libremente por el autor para interponerlo entre el lector y su propia obra ya creada,

independiente? A causa de esta interposición o paréntesis del prólogo se produce un diálogo entre autor y lector ante un *espectáculo* (el libro), que empezará puntualmente a la caída del telón (el prólogo). El prólogo será el telón que nos recuerde que asistimos a un espectáculo intelectual, a un juego creado por nuestras mentes, a algo voluntariamente alejado a la vida (aunque ésta sea *representada* después).

[...]

La ilusión de ficcionalidad entre espectador (o lector) y autor, la consigue al Manierismo con otros recursos en sus prólogos. Un procedimiento de subrayar la *distancia* que precisa la obra manierista es hablar de la confección de prólogo en el mismo prólogo. Este es un recurso que subsiste en el Barroco. Es lo que hace el gran manierista que es Cervantes en el prólogo a la primera parte del *Quijote*. Además, para destacar la *ilusión-ficción* del propio prólogo, hace que penetre un amigo como un personaje novelesco. (Mayo 1968, 8-10)

It is a repeated convention throughout Lejárraga's collection, whereby her prologues reveal this "ilusión-ficción" of the narrator, to remind the narrator of "esta ficcionalidad". This much older convention is essential to highlight the critical space between the text and the performance, and the critical distance of the reader in the characterisation of the narrator.

In exile, Lejárraga became disillusioned with the Socialist Party, to which she had dedicated many years of her life, including many years of political persecution in which "en que la vida no sirve para nada" (Martínez Sierra 1952, 234). There is a link between her past political exile as a consequence of her activism during the Spanish Civil War. This disillusionment is encapsulated in her observation in *Una mujer por caminos de España*: "Serviremos para algo, ya que no servimos para nada" (Martínez

Sierra 1989, 234). She proposes the limited ability of politics to ever truly engender change in society, whilst her return to playwriting demonstrates a commitment to continue to write under difficult circumstances by awakening the imagination that she believes can make a real change. In the previous quotation about memory and performance Lejárraga proposes a link connecting us from childhood to adulthood that creates a need to participate imaginatively in a performance. She outlines a theory of the fundamental human need to be observed and the importance of each individual to feel as though they have an audience, describing the need to see theatre as being connected to a basic human desire to have witnesses to life. In this way, the prologue becomes a psychological observation on the human condition and our need to feel that our lives have significance.

This in turn links to Lejárraga's authorial recuperation, publishing under her married name:

En este sentido, todos somos niños, de la cuna hasta el sepulcro, porque si no podemos vivir sin la diversión que el espectáculo nos proporciona, también nos sería imposible la felicidad si no creyéramos que alguien está mirándonos, atento a nuestro juego, ya que "la vida, comedia es". Una mujer, contemplando la Luna una noche serena, se preguntó: "¿Seré yo la Luna para alguien?" Consciente o inconscientemente, todos lo estamos preguntando siempre, unos con inquietud sentimental, otros con el orgulloso deseo de influir en la vida del mundo, algunos por mero prurito de vanidad: "¡Ser, ser o, por lo menos, parecer que se es a toda cosa!". Quien de veras creyere que no tiene en la vida un solo espectador apasionado, se volvería loco. Y casi todos los locos afirman que son Napoleón... o el Papa... (Martínez Sierra 2009, 74-5)

In this concept of performance, she outlines how “espectáculo” has a direct connection to our past childhood selves, and by proxy to our imagination and fundamental to the human condition. The Calderonian, “la vida, comedia es”, is reiterated later in the prologue when Lejárraga directly mentions “el gran teatro”, and the idea of the world as a stage. The need to have a witness to our lives is described as a basic human desire to have at least one passionate spectator. This breaks the cathartic response of the reader and includes a reference to their own need to have a spectator of their lives, and in doing so makes meta-theatrical reference to their role as spectators of the play. This theory of performance, of the need for a spectator, can also be connected to Lejárraga’s process of reclaiming her authorial name in the collection. This is further reinforced as the ephemeral nature of life is compared to the fleeting nature of performance. Lejárraga links this theory of performance back to her imagined response of the reader to this “miscellaneous” collection:

No te asombre, pues, amigo lector, ni te desconcierte hallar en las páginas que siguen comedias, farsas, pantomimas, ballets, esbozos de acción televisada. Todo ello forma parte del Gran Teatro de Mundo. En algunos momentos se te pide que escuches, en otros que mires, en otros que imagines. Así es la vida ahora: estamos bajo la influencia de un nuevo signo del Zodíaco que bien pudiera llamarse Athanor, la desintegración. Se ha hecho realidad el viejo sueño de los alquimistas por el cual tantos murieron en la hoguera... ¡Triste sino el del hombre! No puede dar un paso adelante sin pagarlo con sangre o con tormento. El mito de Prometeo clavado en la roca del Cáucaso y a quien el buitre devora las entrañas por el crimen de haber robado el fuego al Cielo para dárselo a los hombres a quienes tanto amara, se ha ido haciendo realidad a través de siglos y siglos y siglos. ¿Qué más querrán saber y poder los que vengan

después que nosotros, y a qué horrendo precio lo habrán de pagar? (Martínez Sierra 2009, 75)

In *Tragedia*, Lejárraga incorporates a range of influences, most clearly from the avant-garde, Baroque and Spanish Golden Age periods. She also makes reference to another important set of references by incorporating the Greek myths used in the prologues and plays. These different styles show a clear juxtaposition of a range of different mythological references (e.g. Prometheus, alchemy). She draws an analogy between these historically violent contexts by using the parallel of the Greek myth of Prometheus who was punished by Zeus with eagles eating his intestines for giving humans fire. Including this myth of the origins of humanity draws a parallel to Lejárraga's concern for her contemporary post-war question regarding the uncertainty of what will come next for humanity: "¿Qué más querrán saber y poder los que vengan después que nosotros, y a qué horrendo precio lo habrán de pagar?" (Martínez Sierra 2009, 75).

Returning to Lejárraga's concept of performance, this is explicitly contextualised within a post-war context which: "No puede dar un paso adelante sin pagarlo con sangre o con tormento" (Martínez Sierra 2009, 75), making a more explicit reference to the relentless cycles of violence witnessed by Lejárraga following Spain's Civil War, including two World Wars, the Cold War and the Vietnam war. Alongside the critical distance established between the narrator and reader, is the extent to which this collection can be read as a commentary upon her contemporary political and historical context, showing her decision to move to theatre instead of activism in order to engender political change. The prologue therefore changes its focus from the potentially redemptive qualities of our imagination and our innate need for performance, to a more negative reflection on humanity's propensity towards war. Lejárraga juxtaposes a basic duality of humanity, which is presented as both innately imaginative and violent. In her prologues there is a fundamental

necessity for “espectáculo”, imagination, and above all the importance of “la comedia” as a distraction from these hard realities, tying in the human need for entertainment and imagination, particularly during moments of political and historical hardship. In exploring this human duality reflected upon in the prologue, Lejárraga positions this from her own historical and political context:

No malgastemos palabras triviales en filosofías de escuela elemental. Quiero decir que tampoco es novedad la dislocación de los modos de atender que al parecer exijo de vosotros: ya estamos avezados a usarla: en la lectura, comprendemos la totalidad de una acción y hasta de una ilusión con sólo ver las letras; en el teléfono y la radio, con solo oír; en el cine mudo, llegábamos a formar un concepto sin ayuda de la palabra; en el cine sonoro y hablado llegamos hasta a darnos cuenta de una continuidad por medio de fragmentos inconexos y hasta deshilvanados; en la televisión, sus adeptos se las arreglan para encontrar sentido a sus visiones aunque frecuentemente suela faltarles el sentido común. Y ¿qué decir del mero ritmo y de la danza, su hija primogénita, que sirvió a los primitivos grupos humanos para comunicarse informaciones y emociones antes de la invención de la palabra? Todo ello prueba la milagrosa elasticidad de la mente humana. (Martínez Sierra 2009, 75-6)

Here she describes how communication has changed as a consequence of the development of technology in the twenty first century to become “fragmentos inconexos y hasta deshilvanados”, and how the miscellaneous organisation of her own collection is representative of this radically altered world. She makes reference to the contemporary moment she was living through in the 1960s, being characterised by developments in technology and an increased pace of

life which she depicts as leading to more fragmentary reading habits. Lejárraga incorporates the criticism of the collection, by comparing the “incoherent” way readers are now consuming narratives through radio, cinema, television, dance and literature. Rather than this being negative, instead Lejárraga shows that the miscellaneous collection reflects the contemporary context that it was written in, and through this variety of genres and conventions shows: “la milagrosa elasticidad de la mente humana”.

By the end of the prologue, the narrator draws attention to the collection’s combination of old and new conventions, evidenced as she described her collection as wildly extravagant, shown in her description of the collection as “un tanto funambulesco” (76). She then creates a further ironic stance between the narrator and reader by dismissing her prologue as nonsensical (“palabrería”). Depicting the collection as serving no objective aside from serving the purpose of being an entertaining distraction for the reader from the material concerns of their lives and the historical and political context:

En fin, toda esta palabrería espero haya servido para advertirte de que el libro que te dispones a leer es un tanto funambulesco. No lleva otro fin que el de distraerte, apartándote algunos instantes de la obsesión materialmente preocupada que es el fondo de la vida actual. Puedes leerle en el orden que mejor te parezca, abrirle al azar por uno u otro pliego. Si te hace sonreír un segundo, si logra emocionarte un instante, si acaso enciende en tu horizonte un fugaz relámpago de pensamiento, no habrá trabajado en vano al imprimirle el noble gremio de la tipografía el que pelea — tropa de vanguardia— en todas las batallas del espíritu.

Apenas te acometa un asomo de tedio, deja caer el libro sin remordimiento; no se ofende, no se duele, no te guarda rencor. Si en realidad contiene tal cual buena semilla, ella encontrará terreno que la esté necesitando o tú encontrarás hora en que necesites utilizar la que en este momento no te sirve.

Gracias, una vez más, por la buena intención. (76)

This critical awareness is reiterated as the narrator points to the reader's free will, referring to them having the option of not reading the book should they deem it to be too boring or offensive. The general prologue to the collection is essential for creating this critical space in the text between the narrator and reader. It is also deployed to outline her concept of performance and theatre, which is rooted in a critical interrogation of the purpose of "espectáculo" for humanity.

Prologue to Tragedia de la perra vida

In the prologues to *Tragedia*, Lejárraga dramatizes her creative process of conceiving and writing the play. In doing so she further develops the critical space between herself and the reader, positioning the narrator and reader as active spectators of the creative process. Lejárraga combines fact and fiction in an experimental way, and this is seen early on in the prologue as she describes the affection she feels for her play. The act of writing the play is described in comparable terms to that of a mother who had conceived and given birth to a child through the process of her dreams: "Mi cariño a esta olímpica tragedia puede compararse al que sentiría una madre que hubiese concebido y dado a luz un hijo... en sueños" (77). The imagery of the play as a child and writing as giving birth, also has an inter-textual echo, where Lejárraga's describes her texts as her "hijos" in *Gregorio y yo*: "Decidí que los hijos de nuestra unión intelectual no llevarán más que el nombre del

padre” (Martínez Sierra 2000, 26-7). There is a tension between Lejárraga’s depiction of the creative products of her union with Gregorio as carrying the name of the father, and the gendered agency of publishing under her married name for the first time. Other critics such as O’Connor (1972; 1975; 1978) have previously noted the debates around why Lejárraga chose for the plays to carry the name of the father and in fact these debates around the authorship of the plays have dominated the critical discussions of these texts. This analysis does not focus on these questions of Lejárraga’s use of Gregorio’s name because this has been covered by other critics, instead it explores the ways in which she self-consciously inserts herself as the author character in the plays published under her own name.

Lejárraga’s depiction of herself as a creative mother also links to her quotation about women as child bearers, as integral to the creative “fecundidad, don de hembra” (Kirkpatrick 2003, 149). In this next prologue, Lejárraga also returns to the issue of the miscellaneous nature of the collection:

Así yo, una mañana al despertar, vi escritas en el aire con bellas titulares latinas, las cinco palabras: *Tragedia de la perra vida*, y debajo de ellas, también en el aire, transformando en mágica pantalla, se iba desarrollando una acción, la misma que vais a leer, mezcla de pantomima, ballet y sainete, puesto que tiene danzas, acción muda, palabras, ilación, principio y fin. ¡Allí estaba; con todos sus puntos y comas, con sus personajes y su puesta en escena, su división en partes, su tramoya, su vestuario y su guardarropía! (Martínez Sierra 2009, 77-8)

The mysterious inspiration for the text is dramatized through the visualisation of the play having been written one morning as the result of her having seen the “bellas titulares latinas” of the play’s title hanging in the air. Lejárraga

situates herself in the position of being both a spectator and an author of the play. This literary device recreates a sense of dramatic tension for the reader, akin to that of the audience waiting to watch a performance. The description shows how in the prologue to *Tragedia* Lejárraga applies her theory of humanity's need for "espectáculo" by incorporating these features within the preface. She continues this theatricalisation of the writing process in the prologue:

Una semana tardé en "escribirla". En un día pudiera haber quedado escrita a no ser porque la vieja arcilla se cansa del esfuerzo material, y porque parodiando el famoso: "*Je me défie tendrement de ce je désire*" de Montaigne, puedo decir que desconfío ásperamente de lo que escribo con facilidad, y cuando las palabras se dan demasiado de prisa, les tiro de la rienda para que se calmen. (Martínez Sierra 2009, 78)

By giving the reader specific facts about this process, she further blurs the line between fact and fiction. Lejárraga describes how it had taken her just a week to write the play, and subsequently her concern for its quality given how quickly she had written it. The narrator's tone is deeply ironic here, especially when referring to the earlier concern regarding whether the reader would feel they had made a worthwhile investment in buying the book. The use of the Montaigne quotation further alludes to Lejárraga's interest in the relationship between the fictional narrator and herself as an author, reclaiming her name from historical and public oblivion. Lejárraga makes reference to Montaigne's original statement: "je me deffie un peu tendrement des choses que je souhaite" (I am a little tenderly distrustful of things that I wish), showing how she focused on the relationship between the self and the act of writing, and Montaigne's statement originally written in the sixteenth century: "I am myself the matter of my book" (Montaigne 1877, accessed June 2015), Lejárraga further blurs this line between fact and fiction by inserting herself as

the fictional narrator and author in the text. The dramatization of the creative process of writing the collection is connected to Lejárraga's reclaiming of her authorial identity by publishing under her married name, "María Martínez Sierra", for the first time. She outlines the difficulties of getting the play staged and makes direct references to her own struggle in exile, as an unknown author, again re-establishing herself as a playwright under her married name. It is in the prologue to *Tragedia* that Lejárraga most explicitly references this:

Otro motivo, también de orden maternal, me mueve a tener especial afecto a esta obra. Sabido es que las madres acostumbran a sentir más cariño por el hijo que no logra en la vida grandes éxitos. "No tiene suerte", dicen, aunque el desdichado sea un perfecto tarugo, y procuran, a su modo, a compensarle de su mala fortuna. Yo sospecho que mi *Tragedia de la perra vida* ha de tener tan poca fortuna como su menguado protagonista. La fortuna de una obra concebida como espectáculo consiste en alcanzar los honores de la representación. Y ésta obra es muy difícil de poner en escena. El libro está hecho, más para que llegase al público por vías normales haría que encontrar:

- Un músico entusiasta que quisiera correr el riesgo de trabajar mucho acaso para nada.
- Un director de escena casi excepcional.
- Un empresario dispuesto a arriesgar su dinero en una "aventura".

Si el autor fuera un hombre joven, "a fuerza de paciencia y saliva" como la hormiga de la fábula, vendría a cabo de tanta dificultad, lo mismo que la hormiga acabó por tragarse el elefante... Mas yo, madre infeliz, soy mujer, y he alcanzado

hace ya mucho tiempo la edad canónica, dicho de otra manera, inofensiva.

Por lo cual, amigo lector, te suplico leas esta tragedia con benevolencia, y, si a ella y a mí quieres hacernos el honor de ejercitar la imaginación un punto más de lo acostumbrado, figúrate que la estás viendo representar. (78-9)

In this passage she moves from the more abstract discussion of dream worlds in order to relate her work to the realities of the contemporary context she had been living in, evidenced as she outlines the reasons for precisely why this play would not be staged. She then ironically states that the only reason for writing a play is for it to be staged: “Porque ¿de qué sirve una tragedia por muy bien pensada, trabajada y escrita que esté si no se representa? La obra dramática no está completa hasta que el público ha dicho frente a ella la última palabra” (80). The juxtaposition is clear here given that Lejárraga did not believe that her plays would ever be staged, as evidenced in the detailed reasons she gives in this quotation for their lack of performance. In describing this she focuses on three main reasons: firstly, the need to find a “musical enthusiast” who would be willing to risk a lot of work for an uncertain production. Secondly, she argues there would need to be an almost exceptional director able to manage the complexities of the play. Thirdly, that there would have to be a businessman willing to take a commercial “risk” on the play, given that “ésta obra es muy difícil de poner en escena”. Lejárraga playfully positions the narrator in the prologues as an ironic strategy to expose her awareness of her own marginal position as an author, and includes the reader in this understanding. This is reinforced as she later claims that a play can only be considered worthwhile if it is staged, followed by her outlining the reasons why *Tragedia* would not be staged.

Tragedia begins as a play within a play set upon Mount Olympus, written and watched over by the Gods on stage (“una historia enmarcada en otra historia” (Pérez-Rasilla 1996, 34). As Pfister notes:

By inserting a second fictional level into the text the dramatist duplicates the performance situation of the external communication system on the internal level. The fictional audience on stage corresponds to the real audience in the auditorium and the fictional authors, actors and directors correspond to their real-life counterparts in the production of the text. (Pfister 1988, 223)

Likewise, in the case of *Tragedia* the tragi-comedy about El Enano becomes representative of an allegorical depiction of humanity at large. In a similar way to the prologues, Jupiter dramatizes the creative process of his inspiration for his writing (81), and puts the audience in the position of being spectators of the dramatized creative process. The lengthy descriptions of Mercury sighing with boredom watching the rehearsal makes a meta-theatrical allusion to the audiences’ own potentially laconic response to the play. Meta-theatre is an essential aspect of the plot of the play, given that the very characters who introduce *Tragedia* are also shown to have written and directed the text. This is shown as the scene opens with the Roman God Jupiter, the author of the play, standing alongside Mercury, the director. *Tragedia* begins by highlighting the dramatic irony of Mercury introducing the play to the audience of Gods and then makes reference to the meta-theatrical nature of the play:

MERCURIO.- (*Gesticulando y gritando ante el teatrillo.*)
¡Atención, Inmortales! Se va a representar en vuestro honor la *Tragedia de la perra vida*, invención feliz de alguien a quien no es necesario nombrar. El autor la somete a vuestro juicio con

modestia inaudita. Bien quisiera conservar el incógnito, mas le delatan la contracción del siempre sereno rostro y el temblor que le agita ¡a Él, que nunca temblara! Sed benévolos sin dejar de ser justos.

DIOSES E INMORTALES prorrumpen en alentador aplauso.

MERCURIO.- ¡Silencio! La tragedia consta en cuatro cuadros, titulados: INFANCIA, JUVENTUD, MADUREZ, SENECTUD. Antes, a manera de prólogo, se danzará un Ballet-pantomima titulado:

Tres truenos. Descórrase el telón. –La escena representa un claro en un florido naranjal. (Tal vez es el Jardín de las Hespérides.) Listones de bien pulido cedro forman el tablado.
(81-2)

Lejárraga highlights the critical distance between the reader and the play by including references to the Gods' reactions as part of the stage directions: "El respetable público inmortal aplaude entusiasmado. Los danzantes se retiran al fondo, y se inmovilizan en bellas actividades, a la sombra de los naranjos" (82). She foregrounds the tension between the audience and the spectator by breaking the fourth wall and forcing the reader to take a critical stance. This dramatization of the four stages of life is shown through the dance, which also conveys an allegorical representation of life, linking with some of the Calderonian themes of the overlap between life and theatre.

There is a melancholic depiction of humanity's destiny, symbolised through the main protagonist of the play, the hapless dwarf, El Enano. This character embodies what Pérez-Rasilla termed: "una amarga reflexión de carácter existencial sobre la condición humana" (Pérez-Rasilla 1996, 25). The

play is divided into the four stages of life: Infancia; Juventud; Madurez; Senectud. El Enano represents humanity and a tragic enactment of life across its four stages, as the play follows his journey through childhood, youth, maturity and old age. The grotesque and tragic nature of the play is shown as the monkeys come on stage to represent this final stage and as El Enano “imita grotescamente” (Martínez Sierra 2009, 101) the elderly characters from Senectud. The focus of the play centres on the tragic nature of life, and El Enano as symbolic of this struggle between vice and virtue, and his internal conflict is embodied on stage in the fight between these opposing elements. This is visually depicted in the play as the dwarf is stood in the middle of the stage, as a witness to the fight on stage between the senses and sins. It is precisely from this dramatic context showing a battle between two distinct entities, from which the dwarf, symbolizing humanity, appears on stage:

LOS CINCO SENTIDOS salen de su inmovilidad, reaniman a
LUJURIA exánime y a ENVIDIA medio muerto, y entran todos,
SOBERBIA y AVARICIA inclusive, en movimiento
desaforado. LOS SENTIDOS mandan: LOS PECADOS
triunfan. ¡Suyo es el mundo! ¡Aún no! Que, cuando insensatos
parecen haber perdido todo freno, entran pausadamente LAS
VIRTUDES, siete figuras femeninas vestidas con largas túnicas
gris-plata, tocadas con guirnalda de blancas rosas. (85)

A number of parallels can be drawn between the allegorical dramatic strategies deployed in *Tragedia*, when compared to the earlier tradition of the plays published under the Gregorio Martínez Sierra pseudonym. The incorporation of allegorical characters shows one clear reference to the Spanish modernist theatre tradition, seen here in the characterisation of the five senses, sins and virtues. The description of the fight for El Enano is portrayed through dance, to show the plot rather than tell it through dialogue. The dance between El Enano and these characters most clearly symbolizes the

existential struggle of life, and humanity's conflicting desires, being pulled between the different senses as symbolically shown in the fight between sin and virtue. Following the struggle between the sins, senses and virtues, the play returns to the meta-theatrical setting of Mount Olympus (representing life) which the dwarf (representing humanity) begs to leave. In spite of this he subsequently repeats the tragi-comic farce of life, having gained and lost his fortune: “¡Lo verdaderamente horrible es que se acaba. ¡Por favor, déjame volver a empezar! ¿Dónde vas a encontrar desdichado más perfecto que yo?” (102). This speech summarises the overarching plot of the narrative, which focuses on the tragedy of life and humanity. It also shows the reaction of the Gods who act as the audience for the play within the play to involve the readers further in the action of the play by showing them the Gods' reactions to the play through the act of them reading the play. The narrator ironically predicts some of the audiences' reactions to the play by showing how the Gods reacted to the play: “Los invitados aplauden cortésmente y se ríen. Mas, entre las risas y los aplausos, déjanse oír algunos bostezos” (91). This allegorical fight for the world echoes the action that will take place in the narrative of the play. The grotesque narrative and character of the dwarf may well also make an allusion to Valle-Inclán's *Divinas Palabras* (Valle-Inclán, accessed April 2016) first staged in 1933 as a relentlessly negative depiction of humanity, with the dwarf Laureano guiding the audience through the narrative.

El Enano constantly moves between the stage as an actor and then off stage as a spectator. Through El Enano's movement, Lejárraga alludes to the readers' own movement from passive spectators to active participant. This is evidenced when El Enano tries to leave the stage, only to be forced back by the Gods. It reveals Lejárraga's gameplay with the audience, who becomes part spectator and part participant of the scene. Through this approach, the narrator negotiates her theory of “espectáculo”, forcing the readers to use their imagination. El Enano is an outsider in the play and in this sense his role

mimics that of the reader, as Lejárraga uses him to further dramatize the reader's awareness of themselves as fictional spectators of the plays, shown as the characters are inserted as participants of the play, depicting some amused and applauding, and some bored (82). By the end of the play, she refers once again to this ironic space between the narrator and reader. The cyclical structure of the play is also revealed as Lejárraga returns to the meta-theatrical dramatization of the reader as the audience of the play. This is most clearly seen at the end of the play as Lejárraga makes a reference back to the readers' reactions at the very beginning:

Córrese el telón. –Los invitados aplauden tumultuosamente para mostrar su regocijo porque haya ¡al fin! llegado la terminación del espectáculo, y abandonan sus bancos.

En el suelo, junto a MERCURIO, montón casi informe de huesos y harapos, ha quedado EL ENANO, que se agarra a las piernas del dios para intentar salvarse.

[...]

MERCURIO.- *(Con asombro.)* ¿Quieres volver a las andadas?

ENANO.- *(Con fervor)* ¡Sí, sí!

MERCURIO.- ¿Cómo es posible? Tú, precisamente tú, feo, despreciado, zaherido, engañado, apaleado, manteado... Tu vida ha sido un puro sinsabor.

ENANO.- *(Furioso.)* ¡Sinsabor! ¿Cómo puedes hablar del sabor de la vida, tú que nunca has temido perderla?

[...]

JÚPITER.- ¿No te das cuenta? ¿No has oído? Hasta el más desdichado de los actores quisiera volver a representarla. No cabe

duda. LA TRAGEDIA DE LA PERRA VIDA es una obra genial.
(102-3)

The cyclical structure of the references made in the play shows the transition from the comic to the tragic, as humanity is doomed endlessly to repeat their tragic fate, which is symbolized in *El Enano*. This reference to past forms is made by incorporating a variety of theatrical genres, categorized by Pérez-Rasilla as “teatro medieval”; “los autos sacramentales” (1996, 35) as well as the avant-garde theatre published under the Martínez Sierra pseudonym. This structure also reveals how Lejárraga was writing from the perspective of being a spectator herself, haunting her own past, referring to Lejárraga’s insertion of her own self-conscious position as the author playing a role in the text, whilst also revealing the performative role of the reader in the play.

“Hablando con el lector.” Prologue to *El amor vuela*. *Farsa con coros, en seis cuadros*.

In the prologue to *El amor vuela*, Lejárraga returns to the dramatization of the creative process of writing the collection. She sets the scene by describing the experience of watching a rendition of an overly melodramatic actress performing in a play, and the uncomfortable experience of the audience.

Lejárraga describes the subsequent failure of the play as a consequence of this bad acting (Martínez Sierra 2009, 105-6). In this passage Lejárraga describes herself from the perspective of being an audience member watching the play. This inclusion of herself as an audience member is another meta-theatrical strategy where she constructs a dramatic space of awareness for the reader in the prologue to the play. She discusses a disjunction between the “deberes” of performance (“espectáculo”), and the specific historical and political contexts from which they were written. Lejárraga returns to her concept of

performance as a necessity for humanity and again foregrounds the difficulty of being able to neatly categorise the plays of the collection in any one genre. She includes a series of rhetorical questions about the genre of the plays, and in doing so forces the reader to confront the question, placing them in a critical position. She describes the play as having been written during an historical context of disaster and pain, and shifts the focus to her authorial process of writing the plays. Outlined in the prologue to *Tragedia* is an account of the creative process of writing the play. Lejárraga makes reference to the post-war context she had been living in Buenos Aires:

Primero ¿de qué?... La obra en cuestión no tenía título, asunto, ni argumento, ni color, ni siquiera fantasma. ¿Sería drama? ¿Comedia? ¿Zarzuela? ¿Sainete? ¿Pantomima? ¿Cuál había de ser su tesis, su problema? Al oír las presuntuosas palabras, todos los Ángeles de la Historia se echaron a reír. ¿Qué problema, qué tesis podía interesar a un habitante de la Tierra que aún estaba sintiendo en todo el cuerpo la trepidación y el fragor de las bombas que estallan, el extraño vacío del hambre, la mordiente tristeza del frío, únicas realidades de cinco largos años? ¿Qué interés había de alcanzarle que no fuera el asombro de seguir viviendo, de llevarse las manos a la cabeza y encontrarla en su sitio? ... ¿Qué esperanza o qué solución pudieran ofrecérsele que el cambiar incesante en el vertiginoso mundo de la postguerra no hiciese envejecer y disiparse en humo durante el tiempo en que la obra dramática se estuviera escribiendo? (Martínez Sierra 2009, 106)

Following the uncertainty of the play's genre there is subsequently also speculation about the intentions driving the text. Specifically, Lejárraga questions how she could write such a light-hearted play in a post-war European context, "el vertiginoso mundo de la postguerra" (106). She applies

this context to her own experience of having lived through “la trepidación y el fragor de las bombas que estallan, el extraño vacío del hambre, la mordiente tristeza del frío, únicas realidades de cinco largos años” (106). She highlights the juxtaposition between the historical, political and social context of exile, political persecution, and the backdrop of ongoing world war and then contrasts this with the apparent light-heartedness of the texts from the collection, bringing to the fore the apparent discrepancy between the melodramatic plot of *El amor vuela*, compared to the brutal post Spanish civil and world-war context from which they had emerged. Lejárraga returns to the basic human need for “espectáculo”, apparently incongruous to the harrowing experiences of war and violence. She refers again to the power of the imagination to distract and entertain through performance. In her plays, she refers to this disjunction between the post-war context and the melodramatic and ludic play. This makes a connection to the work Lejárraga had done many years earlier as an activist, and her retreat away from politics and back to writing. She returns to the importance of theatre and performance and imagination, as conversely being the only viable space for creative resistance. She further refers to the conflict through the graphic descriptions of the violence, depicting for instance “los pedazos de carne en las latas de la basura...” (106). Lejárraga then dramatizes her internal voice, as the prologue becomes the self-conscious space that she explores as a spectre of her own life in the narrator. The juxtaposition between her descriptions of violent graphic images, such as flesh chopped up and thrown in the bin, combined with the seemingly light-hearted melodrama plot of *El amor vuela*, creates a contrast between the prologue and the play. What Lejárraga articulates in this prologue is an acute awareness of herself as an exiled Spaniard in a foreign country. She describes a disconnection from her exiled context: “estoy en la Argentina, pero aún no la conozco ni la entiendo” (107), which reveals the prologue as an important marginal space in which Lejárraga comments on her state of exile, and awareness of being an outsider through the guise of the narrator, creating an unclear distinction between life and fiction. Lejárraga appears more

confident using the fictional persona of the narrator than the first person retrospective self we see depicted throughout her autobiographical texts, such as *Una mujer por los caminos de España* (Martínez Sierra, 1952).

“Diálogo de la autora con un lector amigo de poner los puntos sobre las íes”. *Es así: Comedia Dramática “a la Antigua” en tres actos y en prosa*

Lejárraga’s *Fiesta* collection shows a critical reflection on questions of exile and authorial identity. In part this has already been discussed in the disjunction between the post war context and the plot of the plays. It is most evidently seen in Lejárraga’s prologue to *Es así*, where she describes the potential of performance to further analyse her theory of “espectáculo”. Again Lejárraga dramatizes her writing process for the collection:

Así el lector que, en este libro, antes de emprender la lectura de una obra dramática escrita por una mujer que aún vive y que según afirman ella y unos cuantos amigos que bien la quieren es “de hoy hasta los tuétanos” en el pensar y en el sentir, y aún se permite ocasionales excursiones por las inexploradas selvas del mañana, espera acaso topar con una comedia cruda en la exposición, rápida en la acción, decididamente sexual en la intención, despiadada en la conclusión como incita a escribirlas el sentir del momento, y pudiera también, desconcertarse y decir: “esta buena señora nos cuenta un cuento de hadas.
(Martínez Sierra 2009, 189)

Lejárraga’s discussion regarding the veracity of the narrative of the play, makes another reference back to her earlier discussion of the “espectáculo”, and the fundamental role that drama provides as an imaginative distraction from everyday realities. She then discusses the purpose and role of the arts in relation to contemporary events, such as the Hiroshima bomb: “¡Ay de nosotros, pobres dramaturgos, cómo ha cambiado la orientación de nuestro

humilde oficio la bomba de Hioshima!” (Martínez Sierra 2009, 189). She then juxtaposes this with her own play, which she openly describes as using aspects of a bygone theatrical style. This is a recurring motif throughout Lejárraga’s plays, which move from a debate around the spectacle to a discussion of the real life atrocity. Later on in the prologue, Lejárraga is asked by her translator Collice Portnoff why she did not contextualise her play more explicitly in this political context. The response she provides makes for an interesting discussion of the creative process of writing for performance and the role of the playwright:

En eso precisamente se diferencia la creación divina de la humana: Dios sabe y puede crear de la nada: los dramaturgos damos palabra y movimiento a seres que existían fuera de nosotros. Por eso cuando algunos gacetilleros teatrales llevados de la buena voluntad de halagarnos, dicen de un dramaturgo o de un comediante que *creó* un personaje, cometen un error y no deben llamarnos *creador* a uno ni a otro, sino *autor* y *actor*, respectivamente. Y una obra teatral en la cual los personajes viven dentro de un tiempo determinado, es decir histórico, no puede adoptar para exteriorizarlos e interpretarlos formas que aún no existían cuando ellos vivieran. (190)

Lejárraga discusses the work of the playwright as being better described as being that of an author and actor, because, she argues, characters are produced from “seres que existían fuera de nosotros”, rather than from “la nada”. Despite Lejárraga’s view that characters are lifted from the real world to then be performed, she did not believe in using characters from specific historical contexts, precisely because they are dramatized character traits, and cannot therefore represent life. Lejárraga argues for the need for more universal characters liberated from their specific circumstances, and therefore able to provide what Lejárraga viewed as the essential purpose of theatre: an

imaginative liberation from reality. This can also be applied to Lejárraga's collection as a whole, which constantly negotiates the boundary between fact and fiction, imagination and reality, as part of a dramatic strategy for reasserting her authorial identity.

Sueños en la venta: Cuadro lírico bailable and Muerte de la locura

In Lejárraga's fifth and final section of the *Fiesta* collection there are four texts which she describes as "fantasías líricas": *Sueños en la venta: Cuadro lírico bailable*; *Muerte de la locura*; *Milagro Gitano (Fantasía Cómico Lírica)* and *Triunfo de la Petenera (Cuadro Lírico bailable)*. In the *Real Academia Española (RAE)*, accessed June 2015), there are eight definitions of the word "fantasía" which show the multiple possible interpretations of this term. One of these meanings of the term is a: "Composición instrumental de forma libre o formada sobre motivos de una ópera", which describes the characteristics of the text. This is the most convincing interpretation for the purpose of describing these plays, given that they fit within Lejárraga's textual guidance on categorising the other works from this collection (e.g. "Comedia Dramática", "Farsa", "Comedia") as belonging to the "lyrical fantasy" genre; which is theatre with a strong musical component. Other definitions of "fantasía" from the *Real Academia Española (RAE)* also depict it as an image, such as "fantasmagoría", revealed entirely from the imagination. In this definition creativity has a heightened ability to create as: "Ficción, cuento, novela o pensamiento elevado e ingenioso" (*RAE*, accessed June 2015). These different definitions of the term are important because they make reference to the notion of the collection as a site of tension between the author and reader. González Peña describes the play as:

La verdad es que tanto podría ser un ballet como un poema
sinfónico, está claro que María conoce perfectamente la música
descriptiva, el recurso de los "leit-motiv" de Wagner... etc.,

etc. Podría ser también una suite de danzas. (González Peña 2009, 60)

She also points out the connection between these texts and those written much earlier on in Lejárraga's career during the avant-garde period, such as *Hojas Selectas* and *Talismán de amor y Corte de amor* (1903) (González Peña 2009, 43). These plays are far more experimental than the rest of the works included in the *Fiesta* collection. Stylistically, they stand out as incorporating an amalgamation of many different genres and traditions. Lejárraga includes tropes from the Spanish avant-garde tradition, as well as texts from the auto-sacramental show her use of allegory and incorporation of various aspects of this genre. Her lifelong interest in and extensive knowledge of music and opera are evident in the multiple references made in the texts to the inclusion of music and ballet. They also share conventions of the plays written under the Gregorio pseudonym such as collaborating on *El amor brujo* (1916 & 1925) with Manuel de Falla (Rodrigo 1995, 7). Located in the final section of *Fiesta*, the plays serve the purpose of being the farcical, lighthearted scenes played between the acts of the *comedia* (Thacker 2007, 14). Some parallels can also be drawn between the *sainete* and the *farsa*, given the short episodic quality evident in both of these plays. They also both come at the end of the collection similar to “el sainete del último cuarto de siglo” (Ruiz Ramón 1971, 426). A number of *sainetes* were also written under the Gregorio Martínez Sierra pseudonym (Checa Puerta 1998, 116), so Lejárraga makes a return to earlier dramatic conventions. The final four “fantasías líricas” at the end of the collection are especially representative of what Lejárraga had described as the miscellaneous diversity of the collection. The texts are much shorter and comprise (with the exception of *Milagro gitano*), notably less dialogue with more dance, movement and music driving the plot. *Sueños en la venta* and *Muerte de la locura*, incorporate intertextual references and a variety of different genres, including dance, opera, ballet, and allegory. These references are shown through their inclusion of allegorical characters, but also

thematically in the treatment of plots centring on love and death. Whilst traditionally the *entremeses* carried less importance than the main play, being sandwiched between the longer acts of the *comedias*, they stand out in the collection precisely because of their nonconformity. In this sense, they are most representative of the miscellaneous style referred to by Lejárraga in the prologue that refuses to conform to any one genre and for which the texts had been criticised. As explored in the prologues, it is precisely within these apparently marginal spaces that Lejárraga experiments with the idea of the “espectáculo” (Martínez Sierra 2009, 74).

Sueños en la venta: Cuadro lírico bailable

Sueños en la venta is described in its title as a “cuadro lírico bailable”. Similar to *Tragedia*, it has a large cast of nine characters and two choruses, the *Pescadores(as)* and *comediantes(as)* (Martínez Sierra 2009, 345). The main protagonists are La Moreneta and her lover El Pescador, and the plot is told through ballet and makes reference to Lejárraga’s collaborations with acclaimed composers such as Manuel de Falla. In recent years Lejárraga’s musical collaborations have gained greater critical interest, as was shown in María Luz González Peña’s *Música y músicos en la vida de María Lejárraga* (González Peña 2009). This book further explores Lejárraga’s extensive knowledge of music and the multiple references also evidenced in her plays. The parallels between *Sueños* and her other play, *Tragedia*, can also be drawn from the perspective of the plot, given that both centre on conflict.

Sueños opens with La Moreneta reading a book and quickly develops to show how she moves from being the reader to creating a space in her own imagination, as she takes on the fictional role of one of the characters from the book. This blurring of the lines between fact and fiction is also shown by the incorporation of literary characters from the book she had been reading. These characters are famous literary couples: George Sand and Chopin, and Graziella and Alfonso de Lamartine. Lejárraga includes these literary ghosts

who haunt the scene, whilst the plot references Lejárraga's theory of the importance of the imagination and "espectáculo" for humanity. In the first part of the scene the ghostly literary figures appear to come from the book *La Moreneta* had been reading by the moonlit seaside. This is described as "un libro viejo y destrozado que parece interesarla enormemente" (Martínez Sierra 2009, 346). Repeated references are made to the fact that she refuses to let go of the book: "Sin soltar el libro, deja caer la mano" (Martínez Sierra 2009, 346), "sin soltar nunca el destrozado libro que tiene en la mano" (347), and again when *El Pescador* takes the book away from her: "Ella quiere recobrarlo, pero Él lo arroja violentamente por el hueco del portón" (348). A similar reaction to *La Moreneta*'s absorption in the book is also given by her father: "EL TABERNO se ríe sarcásticamente: - ¡Je, je, je!- cabecea, se lleva un dedo a la sien como diciendo: "¡Esta muchacha está loca!" (346). Lejárraga includes two negative male reactions to the scene of *La Moreneta*'s enjoyment of reading, and her fertile imagination which allows her to be carried away in the narrative of the text. This also connects back to Lejárraga's interest in the fertility of women's imagination and their natural function as authors. A connection is made to women's biological capacity as life givers, making reference to Lejárraga's belief in "la fecundidad hembra" (Kirkpatrick 2003, 149) earlier quoted in her writing on Pardo Bazán. The "tonos fantasmagóricos" (346) that emerge following *La Moreneta*'s reading under the moonlight embody the spectres of her readers' imagination. This becomes an image which is described both musically and visually as:

La música que se ha iniciado con un preludio romántico, tenue e indefinido, aumenta de intensidad, e inicia –adornándole con delicados arabescos- un motivo netamente chopiniano.

La luz de la luna filtrada por la nube adquiere tonos fantasmagóricos. Como, por detrás de la nube, la claridad cae sobre el mar, se forma sobre el agua una ancha banda

fosforescente; parece como si en ella saltasen, sobre el profundo azul, pececillos de plata.

Al suspiro de LA MORENETA, responde un prolongado trémolo de flauta o de violín que parece ser un conjuro mágico, porque sobre la playa, en la bruma de luz, aparecen enlazadas dos SOMBRAS: CHOPIN y GEORGE SAND. (346-7)

What is depicted here is an externalised embodiment of La Moreneta's imagination whilst reading. This links to what Lejárraga had already described in the prologues, in terms of the importance of the human capacity for imagination and her theory of the desire common to all to see an "espectáculo". Following on from this description La Moreneta involves herself as a protagonist in the story she had been reading, as she "tiende los brazos hacia ellos" (347). La Moreneta then physically inserts herself in the stories, visually represented as she takes the place of Graziella in the waltz dance with Lamartine:

LA MORENETA se lanza hacia ellos, empuja a GRAZIELLA que cae blandamente y va rodando a hundirse en el mar, y ocupa su puesto. LAMARTINE no da señales de haber notado la sustitución, y baila con su nueva pareja... pero es un vals extraño... Él fantasma y ella mujer de carne y hueso no llegan a juntarse en un abrazo real, y bailan como si estuviesen enlazados, pero conservándose un tanto separados uno de otro, sin llegar a tocarse, dando, eso sí, vuelta vertiginosas, y marcando las pausas indicadoras del desmayo amoroso. (347)

La Moreneta pushes the ghost of Graziella out of the story, and takes her place to reconfigure herself as a protagonist. This shows how La Moreneta transitions from occupying the space of the reader to becoming an active

participant in the story. La Moreneta physically inserts herself in the narrative in a comparable way to the reader who is similarly inserted as a character in the texts. Returning to the prologue of *Tragedia*, Lejárraga began her prologue by describing the collection as a house and herself as the owner ushering the reader over the threshold. Compared to *Tragedia* in this play there is not a direct address to the audience with the narrator. Nevertheless, the dance between La Moreneta and Lamartine seems to playfully visualise the relationship between the reader of the *Fiesta* collection and an author.

The continual interruption of the male characters, her father and then her lover, makes a reference to the difficulty of La Moreneta attaining this imaginative immersion in reading and, as stated in the text, this highlights the larger issue of female readers not being allowed to exercise their imaginative freedom. The arrival of El Pescador abruptly breaks the fantasy dance scene: “*Como si fuera un exorcismo, el claro y limpio son hace huir a la SOMBRA DE LAMARTINE, y LA MORENETA se queda sola y sin darse, al parecer, cuenta de la desaparición de su pareja, sigue bailando*” (348). The violence with which El Pescador throws her book away and the abruptness of breaking La Moreneta’s imaginative immersion in the scene show an aggressive rejection against her fertile imagination. Partly this would appear to be a consequence of her having independently retreated into the realm of her imagination, from which he is excluded. La Moreneta’s hallucinatory dance with these literary spectres is then interrupted as El Pescador awakens her out of her dreamlike imaginative state and she returns to the world of consciousness. The brutal awakening back to the realities of life is shown visually as she returns to the tavern. In the tavern, a number of stock characters are incorporated and they re-enact the events of the earlier scene, but with different characters. For instance, the flamboyant La Manola steals away El Pescador, whilst La Moreneta is in turn forced to dance the “*la música del bolero o fandango*” (349) with Petrimetre, the petty bourgeois gentleman. The tension centres on La Moreneta and El Pescador’s fear of

being separated during the dance, as the Cómicos farcically contrive to keep the main protagonists separated from one another, by forcing them to dance with these Zarzuelan stock characters. The increasing desperation of La Moreneta to return to El Pescador is visualised through the battle between the rival chorus groups of the Cómicos and the Pescadores, shown as both parties leap out of their boats from the sea to reunite the rightful couple with one another. The scene ends when the father and tavern owner reappears and comically berates the fact that, although order has been restored, “¡y LOS CÓMICOS se fueron sin pagar!” (351).

Whilst on the surface it appears to be a typically conventional happy ending with La Moreneta being reunited with her lost lover, this is problematized by the earlier scenes. The action that follows is characterised by its “solemnidad de farsa” (348), repeating the plot of the phantasmagorical first scene where La Moreneta dances with the literary characters. By contrast, the scene in the tavern with La Manola and El Petrimetre becomes a grotesque aping of the earlier innocent imaginative spectacle as the chorus of Cómicos form groups around the dancing pairs to encourage “las seducciones de las expertas cómicas” (350). Once La Moreneta screams for help there is a battle between Los Cómicos and Los Pescadores:

En la pelea, LOS PESCADORES, que representan a un tiempo la defensa de la inocencia ultrajada y el poder de la Naturaleza, personificada — si así puede decirse — en el mar, triunfan. LOS CÓMICOS huyen a la desbandada. (351)

This allegorical battle between two groups which represent sin (Los Cómicos) and virtue (Pescadores) can be compared to the earlier allegorical battle that took place in *Tragedia*. Although there is an apparently happy resolution by the end of the ballet, as the two lovers are reunited, there is also a hint that both El Pescador and La Moreneta will remain affected by the experience of

having enacted their fantasies. For instance, the description of El Pescador being left with the popular song of bolero and fandango in his mind shows that:

En un resquemorcillo añorante que ha quedado encendido en la fantasía de EL PESCADOR que aprendiera a soñar con amores lejanos e imposibles como los que al principio del ballet inquietaran a su MORENETA. (351)

Although on a superficial level the plot tells the story of La Moreneta being separated and then reunited with her lover, in *Sueños*, Lejárraga creates an “espectáculo” of the imagination being staged. Firstly shown in La Moreneta’s dance with the literary characters, and then secondly in the actual dance in the tavern.

A number of recurring themes can be seen in this basic plot outline here and in the other plays of the collection. Firstly, the plot revolves around a tragicomic love story of separated lovers, and the threat of external forces to this union. This preoccupation with the lovers of her story show clear intertextual references between *Sueños* and the lengthier plays of *El amor vuela*, *Es así* and *El buen tirano*. *El Amor* stands out for its added layer of literary intertextuality, evidenced in its inclusion of historical literary figures. The repeated incorporation of George Sand in this collection shows another intertextual reference in the play. Lejárraga’s setting the play in Catalonia or Mallorca references Sand and Chopin’s infamous trip to the island in the winter of 1838-9 and the former’s publication of *Un hiver à Majorque* (*A Winter in Majorca*) (Sand 1841). Alfonso de Lamartine also published a novel about a doomed love affair, with Graziella, in 1862, *Graziella: A Story of Italian Love* (Lamartine 2010). This adds another layer to the “sombras” (Martínez Sierra 2009, 346) and “fantasmas” (Martínez Sierra 2009, 347) of the text as these literary figures are brought to life in the text. On the one

hand, this could be interpreted as a reference to the notion of the self and writing one's self as a ghostly spectre of their own life, as previously examined in her Montaigne reference. The incorporation of Sand and Lamartine shows Lejárraga's deep knowledge of French literature, given that she was one of the primary translators of her generation for French classic texts into Spanish¹² The text also reflects back on the relationship between the author and the text, which further alludes to Lejárraga's recuperation of her authorial identity in the collection. The act of reading and writing as a form of haunting refers to Lejárraga's reflection on the relationship between the author and writing. It also explores this through the genre of autobiographical writing and the notion of the spectre. Throughout O'Connor's *Mito y realidad de una dramaturga española: María Martínez Sierra* (2003) she outlines parallels between the recurring themes of her plays: the unfaithfulness of men, betrayal and temptresses (often gypsy seducers able to cast a "spell" on men and tempt them), and the demise of Lejárraga's marriage to Gregorio. The analysis of these plays focuses more on incorporating Lejárraga's concept of "espectáculo" and how an essential aspect of her plays is precisely this idea of performance, revealing the overlap between life and theatre.

Muerte de la locura. Sueño de la última noche de Carnaval. Motivos líricos para un ballet

Muerte de la locura has six main characters: La Locura (primera ballerina); Colombina; Pierrette; Pierrot; Arlequín; El Poeta (Primer bailarín) and a chorus of Máscaras Diversas. A number of parallels can be drawn between *Sueños en la venta* and *Tragedia de la perra vida*, given the play's large cast and the way it uses dance to narrate the story. The short ballet's thematic preoccupation focuses on the end of carnival and the loss of innocence, following the betrayal of El Poeta by his muse Colombina with Pierrot. In

¹² For more reading on this topic see: Juan Aguilera Sastre. 2012. "María Martínez Sierra, Traductora: Una Lectura Del Teatro Contemporáneo", ALEC, 37.2, 9-36.

contrast to *Sueños*, where the threat to La Moreneta's innocence, ultimately ends with her innocence being restored, in this play it is clear that Colombina's innocence had already been "corrupted" by Pierrot. The ballet is set at the end of the Carnival and in a time and place therefore outside the usual rules governing society. Lejárraga uses this moment of carnival to depict a topsy-turvy world governed by madness and sensuality in the character of La Locura. The ballet presents a tragic story of the two separated lovers, Colombina's lost innocence and her decision to choose physical pleasure (Pierrot) over a conceptual and platonic love (Poet). This ballet shows a world that has lost its innocence and fallen into madness, although order and reason are ultimately restored by the end.

Lejárraga makes clear references back to *Sueños* as she incorporates stock characters from the late seventeenth century *commedia dell'arte*: Colombina; Pierrot and Arlequín and Pierrette, a rival love interest for Pierrot. She adopts the renewed cultural interest in Pierrot who had been transformed from being a naïve sad fool, to a tragic, mythical, isolated and doomed figure. Jean-Gaspard Deburau's famous interpretation of Pierrot in France during the early 1800s coincides with Lejárraga's incorporation of this stock character from the *commedia dell'arte* into her own play. As noted by Storey:

Pierrot was not always infected with the enervating *weltschmerz* and hypersensitivity of Pierrot *lunaire*,[...] he had in the very earliest days of his career, a comic, engaging poise and brilliance that bespoke nothing of the beautiful but vulnerable soul or the pirouettes of a pliant cane. (Storey 1978, 3)

The earlier reference to the origins of *commedia dell'arte* is immediately evident in the reference to masks as *Muerte* is carried out at the end of carnival, with the "máscaras diversas". Lejárraga's inclusion of Pierrot, the character transformed into a fin-de siècle artist's alter ego, shows how he had

become a prominent figure in the art and literature of the Symbolist and Early Modernist art and literature of the period, further revealing the rich variety of Lejárraga's literary and cultural references in her play. It is important to note that this play represents a complete liberation of the imagination, in contrast to *Sueños* which moves between the fiction of the book and La Moreneta's narrative of her life. In this sense it is similar to commedia dell'arte, given that "characters of the commedia dell'arte, like Falstaff, exist in a present "when anything can be wished", all living, so to speak, at the tips of their libidos" (Storey 1978, 7). The incorporation of Pierrott and the commedia dell'arte characters was also deployed by other modernists such as Lorca, most recently Emilio Peral Vega (2015) has explored the figure of Pierrot as an important image of marginality and failure and the importance of the mask. This shows how Lejárraga's incorporation of these characters is very much grounded within a Spanish modernist tradition, although the text was written many decades after this movement in Buenos Aires.

In *Muerte* a parallel is drawn between Pierrot and El Poeta, traditionally shown in the commedia dell'arte, it was Pierrot who was deceived by his love interest, whilst the shrewd Colombina elopes with the Arlequín character. The plot is subverted in this version, as El Poeta is deceived by Colombina and elopes with Pierrot. Pierrot's character is depicted as far less of a foolish character than the traditional seventeenth century plot of him naïvely pursuing Colombina, to then inevitably lose her to the Arlequín. By contrast in this short ballet Pierrot maintains his characteristic melancholy. Whilst Pierrot was traditionally the butt of the joke for the Arlequín and Colombina, in this version it is El Poeta (Pierrot) who acts as the dejected witness of Colombina's unfaithfulness with Pierrot, while it is Pierrot who mocks El Poeta for having lost her:

EL GRUPO DE MÁSCARAS repite la sarcástica risa de LA LOCURA:

EL POETA.- (*Apasionadamente*) ¡Mía!... ¡Desde siempre y para siempre! (*Con ira a PIERROT.*) ¿Cómo pudiste profanar su encanto?

PIERROT.- (*Con burla.*) Ella soñaba amores pensando en ti... Yo murmuré tus versos en su oído... No abrió los ojos... Los oyó y fue mía...

EL POETA.- (*Con ira.*) Y ahora... ¿Aún duerme?

PIERROT.- (*Con burla.*) Ha despertado... (*COLOMBINA vuelve en sí y se aparta un poco de Pierrot, pero sin acercarse al POETA.*) Más en mis brazos, aprendió la ciencia de amor... y prefiere mi amor a tus sueños...

COLOMBINA.- (*Alargando los brazos hacia EL POETA, pero sin acercarse a él.*) ¡Poeta, mi poeta adorado! ¿Por qué no me enseñaste tú el misterio? (Martínez Sierra 2009, 400)

As we see in this passage, El Poeta takes on the role of the naïve and deceived fool. He includes many of the traits that characterise the Pierrot from the nineteenth century, where he is depicted as an essentially isolated and doomed figure. This is especially seen at the end of the ballet where El Poeta “se arrodilla ante la muerta LOCURA y llora” (Martínez Sierra 2009, 401). It is in this scene that the parallel between *Muerte* and *Tragedia* becomes most apparent, as El Poeta behaves in a very similar way to El Enano. Indeed, he is shown to be perpetually doomed to live with the curse of tragically repeating the same mistakes. There is a suggestion that this tragic fate might also become that of El Poeta’s, given that La Locura proclaims earlier on that,

whilst her night is over, another one will come: “Ríe, Colombina! La nueva noche volverá a traerla.” (399).

The play culminates with the death of La Locura: “ARLEQUÍN.- ¡Ha muerto!” (401). Although the ballet incorporates clear elements of farce, it also adopts a much more solemn tone by the end, finishing with the tragic scene mourning the death of La Locura. There is an intertextual connection here with the tragicomic *Tragedia* being performed to entertain the God’s of Mount Olympus. It then finishes with a final ballet scene of the drunken carnival goers and the allegorical death of La Locura. In staging the death of La Locura, Lejárraga also symbolically performs the end of the *Tragedia* collection:

LA LOCURA.- (*Blandiendo su tirso roto.*) ¡Llegó la hora! En el oriente, el día ha vencido a la noche ¡¡¡Adiós!!! (*Danza un extraño paso de baile, en el cual quiere poner toda la esencia de su vida desconcertada: lágrimas, besos, risas, las ansias del morir. Quiere brindar. ARLEQUÍN le escancia champagne en una copa que sostiene PIERRETTE. LA LOCURA toma la copa, va a llevársela a los labios... pero ya el vino no tiene espuma. Vacila y cae desplomada. Al dar ella en el suelo, la copa se rompe. El vino salpica los rostros de las MÁSCARAS que se inclinan a mirar a su Reina y las gotas que parecen lágrimas, hacen surcos en los pintados rostros.*) (400-1)

In *Sueños* Lejárraga presents the reader with the spectacle of La Moreneta’s imagination embodied in the literary apparitions. This further suggests that the play is a meta-textual reflection on the act of writing the self as a spectre; a notion which had already been set up in the Prologues. Returning to the idea of haunting in relation to this passage, Lejárraga symbolically “kills” the spectacle embodied earlier in the death of La Locura, followed by the onset of

night. The readers are, as with *Tragedia*, written in to the text through the chorus of Las Máscaras. This is depicted as La Locura's champagne glass splashes liquid onto the painted faces of the masks. The drops of champagne on the face of La Locura "parece[n] lágrimas". As this happens the painted faces of Las Máscaras also reveal that "hacen surcos en los pintados rostros". This detail reveals how the reader is incorporated in the text in order to, in the absence of the performance, ensure that they take on a more active and participatory role. The fact that they are masked characters is also important, as it refers back to the theatre's origins in masks and carnivals; showing how all performance is essentially a masking through imagination which culminates in a performance. The importance of setting the play during carnival shows how:

The history of human pleasures — of festivity, games, jokes, and amusements — has seldom met with the same dignified attention afforded the history of human suffering" suggesting that "suffering is perpetual, fundamental to human life, and hence worthy of discourse. Pleasures, felt to be discontinuous and fleeting (not to mention morally and ideologically problematic), remain trivial." (Castle 1986, 1)

Indeed, an important connection is drawn here between Lejárraga's reference in the prologue to the trivial and fleeting nature of her work, and the relationship between this and the importance of "espectáculo" in her plays. Her fundamental belief in the power of the imagination during moments of political turmoil is also shown but in a way that is most connected to the context of her play. In the dramatic death scene Lejárraga pays tribute to these fleeting moments of pleasure, and in spite of their apparent superficiality, as with *El Amor*, she presents them as in fact being as important as those understood as serious and carrying prestige.

The inclusion of the reader is symbolised in the text as the chorus of the “máscaras diversas” also represent the carnival crowd in the play. Lejárraga’s inclusion of a larger crowd is significant in relation to the perspective of returning to the spectacle of the audience watching the play. Although it takes place during a Venetian carnival, Lejárraga also describes it as being a universal play that could be performed in all countries and all times:

Más de media noche, casi al amanecer de un nuevo día. — Plaza en una gran ciudad. — Altos rascacielos cuyas luces se van apagando poco a poco. — La plaza está desierta. — Música confusa y extraña en al cual van mezclados, mejor dicho enredados como en una enmarañada madeja, temas de Carnaval de todos tiempos y países desde el vals de un carnaval de Viena al jazz ultra-moderno, pasando por los temas italianos de un carnaval de Venecia. — Esta música empieza antes de levantarse el telón. (Martínez Sierra 2009, 397)

Scenically the ballet occupies an important liminal space, being set in a big city (likely American) with sky scrapers, yet it also includes the “backdrop” of music from different ages and countries in order to become “un carnaval de Viena al jazz ultra-moderno”. This carnival is celebrated by the end of the play on a world stage. The end of the carnival becomes symbolic of political turmoil and makes reference to Lejárraga’s lived experience of exile following on from the Civil War. In this sense, the ballet changes its focus from a personal depiction of the characters to an exilic and historic discussion. Her use of an antiquated form is reminiscent of the writing she had produced during the avant-garde period, whilst the inclusion of the references to the city and skyscrapers reveals a more contemporary setting. What Lejárraga especially focuses on in her depiction of the carnival is a grotesque and

inverted depiction of reality. She portrays this through the spectacle of the distorted carnival:

Irrumpe en la plaza un grupo numeroso de MÁSCARAS. — Vienen ya cansadas de la orgía nocturna. — Algunas se han quitado las caretas y las traen en la mano pendientes de sus largas cintas o atadas al cuello de modo que la carátula grotesca les cae sobre el pecho. — Hay de todo: payasos, dominós, napolitanas, demonios, majas, faunos, ninfas, etc...
(Martínez Sierra 2009, 397-8)

Her focus on this “esperpento” aspect of the play is also evident in *Tragedia*, shown as the allegorical characters move from making references in the commedia dell’arte, to portray a more symbolic role. This aspect is reinforced through the confrontation of themes of loss of innocence and virtue as a consequence of the adultery:

ARLEQUIN Y PIERRETTE.- (Después de su paso de baile grotesco de fantoches borrachos, entran el grupo de máscaras que rodean a LA LOCURA, y danzando todos juntos, retroceden al fondo de la escena)”
(398)

The ballet moves from an opening depiction of a state of pure chaos to depict a transition to a state of transformation. The play is set precisely at the moment of transition from the madness of the carnival evening to the dawning of a new day:

LA LOCURA.- (Sale del grupo y adelanta hacia ellos.) No lloréis porque se acerca el amanecer. Si tardase en llegar, el amor huiría sin esperarle... ¡Ríe, Colombina! La nueva noche volverá a traerle” (399).

As dawn breaks, El Poeta has been abandoned by his muse: “¡Yo tenía una musa pura y casta! En la orgía de esta noche ha sucumbido. ¡No puedo cantar!”(399), and the loss of Colombina’s innocence coincides with the death of La Locura, who is described by the other characters as being their mother: “PIERROT.- (*Tristemente.*) ¡Ha muerto nuestra madre! Ha muerto la locura... La Razón reina con la luz del día. ¡Cubrámonos el rostro y desaparezcamos!” (401). Lejárraga’s decision to close the collection with the final scenes of exhausted and drunk stock characters from the *commedia dell’arte* further indicates the importance of this web of intertextual references. It signals it to be an essential binding element of Lejárraga’s construction of the internal logic of the collection, showing that, although *Fiesta* incorporates a wide array of genres, it is also very clearly a coherent collection that presents a far more sophisticated and complex body of work than merely being “miscellaneous”. There is also a correlation that can be found between Pierrot’s lament at the death of Locura and the Calderonian notion of “razón” being awoken on death. It is precisely this moment of an awakening of reason that El Poeta seems to demonstrate through his final dance: “*EL POETA.- (Que ya no está borracho, la mira, danza lentamente en torno del rígido y al fin, se arrodilla ante la muerta LOCURA y llora)*” (401). By the end of the ballet the topsy turvy night is transformed from being a world of madness, to one of reason and order. This is shown by the inclusion of La Razón, who had returned to the stage with the coming of day. Although it is one of the shortest texts from the collection, this ballet offers an interesting exploration of the theme of lost innocence. The ending is ultimately positive, as shown in the return to reason and order, in the world in spite of Colombina’s lost innocence. Through the use of allegorical characters and the *commedia dell’arte*, Lejárraga ruminates on themes of exile and her own lived experience of loss, primarily through the female characters. There is a more positive end to this ballet than *Tragedia*, whilst Lejárraga opens *Fiesta* with tragi-comic bitterness, she ends it with a farce, but a farce that has a potential for a positive future as order is restored by La Locura’s death. This reference to the possibility of a return to order is

also significant given that it is the last work of the collection, and therefore closes *Tragedia* as whole.

“Explicación Breve”: Prologue to *Televisión sin pantalla*

Televisión sin pantalla is included in Sastre and Vizcarra’s edition of *Tragedia de la perra vida y otras diversiones* (2009) and is the second part of the *Fiesta en el Olimpo* collection. As was established in the *Tragedia* collection, an important aspect of the texts is the critical distance established by Lejárraga between the narrator and the reader which in turn creates a self-conscious dramatic space in the text. The collection is comprised of ten plays. A comparison can be made between Lejárraga’s “Explicación Breve”, or her prologue to *Televisión*, and the already analysed work from *Tragedia*. In a similar way to the general prologue to *Tragedia*, a direct rapport between the narrator and reader is used in this part of the collection to create a critical distance for the reader:

Poco hay que decir de estos esbozos, bocetos o apuntes, como gustes llamarlo, amigo lector. No son ideas ni invenciones, sino instantáneas fotográficas tomadas al azar del camino y reveladas, es decir escritas, generalmente mucho después de haberse impresionado la película, cuando el haberlas conservado durante largo tiempo en la memoria me diera, hasta cierto punto, la seguridad de que tenían calidad de testimonio auténtico. El único valor que quiero que tú les reconozcas es la fidelidad al modelo, el cual tampoco posaba ni pretendía puesto que ignoraba que alguien le estuviera observando.

No intentan probar nada ni demostrar nada, ni hacen propaganda de idea ninguna. Son así porque fueron así. Los personajes que en ellos intervienen estaban cuando yo los vi y, sobre todo, los escuché, representando una escena del papel

que el Destino les lanzara a desempeñar en “el gran teatro del mundo. (Martínez Sierra 2009, 405)

In this prologue she describes these plays as being small fragmented pieces, “esbozos, bocetos o apuntes”, and makes an autobiographical connection between them and her lived experiences, stating that the characters from the texts have been directly lifted from her own life experience. Rather than being fictional inventions, they are: “instantáneas fotográficas tomadas al azar del camino y reveladas”. She describes them as fragments taken from conversations with real people which have subsequently undergone a process of development in her memory and imagination, following a similar process to a photograph being developed. This long conservation and development process is depicted as taking place in her memory, as was necessary to ensure the authenticity of the statement: “cuando el haberlas conservado durante largo tiempo en la memoria me diera, hasta cierto punto, la seguridad de que tenían calidad de testimonio auténtico.” Lejárraga highlights the importance of the “authenticity” of her texts having reworked them in her memory and then written them. Here she recognises the self-conscious act of writing these memories: “el cual tampoco posaba ni pretendía puesto que ignoraba que alguien le estuviera observando.” This critical tension is reinforced as Lejárraga states that she was not revealing anything new in the collection, by insisting on their fidelity being firmly rooted to events and people from her life: “Son así porque fueron así”. She proposes that the texts are based on real life conversations contrasted with the artistic license deployed in many of them. She includes, for example, obviously fictional elements of the texts, such as conversations between angels (*Meditación de Invierno*) and talking swans (*La cigüeña colectivista (Verdad y Cuento)*), although these could well be symbolic or allegorical conversations bearing a resemblance to real-life incidents; they are clearly not “photographs” taken from her life. In this sense, she uses the prologue as another important space revealing the critical tension between the reader and the text, to create the “espectáculo”.

Lejárraga returns to this question of the necessity for any “espectáculo” in the present day, depicting it as essential for the contemporary audience, who “ha perdido la paciencia y quiere descansar del vértigo con la prisa.” Lejárraga shows how the form and structure of these texts are partly informed by a demand from the readers themselves for the art form to be accessible and not take up too much time:

Espectadora empedernida, tengo para mí que ante todo espectáculo vale la pena detenerse. Poca cosa, dirás, para ofrecérmela. Lector amigo, sé a tu vez sincero. ¿Estás seguro de que no habrías de cansarte si reclamara tu atención unos minutos más? Estamos en la era del espectáculo breve, de la lectura en píldoras, de la sensación apresurada. El público ha perdido la paciencia y quiere descansar del vértigo con la prisa. No hace mucho, oí de labios de mujer una afirmación sobrecogedora. Como ella se las daba de intelectual, le pregunté:

— *¿Lee usted mucho?*

— *No- me respondió-. Cuando empiezo a leer un libro y noto que me interesa demasiado, lo dejo, porque me da miedo perder el tiempo para vivir mi vida.*

— *¿A qué llama usted vivir su vida?*

— *Pues... no lo sé, pero en alguna parte estará lo que ha de sucederme, y no quiero que se me pase inadvertido...*

No le quise decir, porque no hubiera tenido paciencia para escucharme, que lo único que a todos nos sucede en la vida es vivir, y que lo que ha de acaecernos cae sobre nosotros o estalla dentro de nosotros como un bólido o como una bomba, y no hay miedo de que no lo advirtamos, a no ser que nos haga pedazos el choque. (Martínez Sierra 2009, 406)

Also of interest in this context is the conversation Lejárraga recounts of the woman who is afraid of reading in case she loses time from living her own life. Lejárraga returns therefore to the existential questions in her texts, and reaffirms the interconnected nature of the relationship between theatre and life. As Lejárraga states “lo único que a todos nos sucede en la vida es vivir”.

This chapter has carried out close readings of a selection of Lejárraga’s plays published in the *Fiesta en el Olimpo y otras diversiones menos olímpicas* (Martínez Sierra, 2009) collection which was first published in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1960. Comparative readings of plays and prologues were carried out to further explore the playful and self-conscious space dramatic space and the importance of this collection as an act of authorial reclaiming, given it was the first of her plays to be published under her married name. Throughout these texts Lejárraga makes intertextual references to her other writing, and in doing so repeatedly inserts herself in the texts as an ironic narrator figure. The conclusion will now go on to link the close readings of these plays written by these three authors in exile to suggest areas of crossover as well as difference, and more broadly situate the plays in the space of their significance as exile theatre.

Conclusion

My analysis of the plays of Concha Méndez, María Teresa León and María Lejárraga positions the internal and emotional state of exile as interconnected to the act of writing itself, as being a self-conscious space of reflection, since their exile is manifested in different ways through their plays as: “a state of mind whose emotions and value respond to separation and severance as conditions in themselves” (Ilie 1980, 2). Within this psychological and internal plane, this state of mind manifests itself in a need for performance, for agency, written from circumstances in which they lacked the agency to stage the plays. There is a tension between loss and creation, passivity and agency. As suggested by Edward Said: “The achievements of exile are permanently undermined by the loss of something left behind forever. But if true exile is a condition of terminal loss, why has it been transformed so easily into a potent, even enriching, motif of modern culture?” (Said 2001, 137). This paradox of exile as simultaneously being a condition of loss and yet also one of cultural transformation and enrichment, is evident in these plays, as the authors return to the site of loss, in their use of past theatrical conventions, and yet in doing so these plays experiment with this past, culminating in original and irreverent texts. The close readings of the plays in the three chapters focuses on the way in which Méndez, León and Lejárraga’s complexity of their memories, which includes their artistic memory, becomes evident in their new artistic production in writing their plays in exile. Memories of the past are manifested throughout these plays in their references back to their lived experiences, and at an aesthetic level in their incorporation of avant-garde and Golden Age theatrical conventions and allusions. On the one hand this incorporation of earlier dramatic tendencies is an artistic response to the trauma of Spain’s Civil War and their exile. On the other, and as the analysis of these plays proposes, these references to the past also show an imaginative and artistic response to exile and marginality. Returning to Kamen on the notion of exile

what becomes central to the exile is in fact the imagined memory of the homeland:

The notion of exile becomes real only when contrasted with its apparaent opposite: the homeland. [...] During his absence, however, an exile begins to create a vision of the world he came from, and out of this imagined memory a new picture of the homeland is born. (Kamen 2008, 7)

Similarly, the analysis of these plays has shown that through the return to past forms such as the autosacramental and tendencies from the avant-garde period, through these plays the authors create an artistic response to the experience of exile. Rather than trying to recreate the past then, these plays create an affirmative theatrical space of creative resistance. As Angelina Muñiz describes, the transition from memory to literature and creativity culminates in the imaginative moment whereby: “Llega un momento en que el exiliado solamente inventa” (Martínez 2007, 18-9).

Méndez, León and Lejárraga were nominally allowed into intellectual and artistic spaces, but also ultimately denied the chance for experimentation because of their gender. Each play therefore becomes a self-conscious act of transgression. Their plays reveal an awareness of being both on the “inside” and on the “outside” through their playful interaction with the readers. The act of writing plays under conditions of exile, marginality and impossibility creates a self-conscious artistic and political space of theatrical resistance. Each re-imagining of a play in the mind’s eye of the reader becomes not only an act of remembrance, but also an act of resistance. The genre is important: they are plays and consequently carry a physical intention behind the static text, and potential for the addition of many layers of artistic collaboration that the theatre offers. In writing a play the frustrated potential of performance,

which of course links to the unfulfilled artistic and political potential, is shared. This communication is precisely a refutation of inaction and passivity. Any art form might be described as an act of sharing, the fact that the majority of these plays were published posthumously is significant because in the moment of writing the plays, they could not and would not necessarily have known that they would even be read, let alone performed. Though these plays carry less cultural capital than their life-writing, I suggest that they may in fact be seen to demonstrate a more subversive art form. In these plays the writers are divorced from the first person “*I*” to which they have been so tethered in retrospective criticism, the “*I*” of “the wife of” being the most common and pervasive. This separation from the first person allows for a greater polyphony of voices, a separation between the biographical / personal “*I*” and the writerly plural, and ultimately has a liberating effect which allows them to explore failure, potential and dreams through a seemingly incongruous medium: plays. In essence, the argument of this thesis is that the plays of León, Méndez and Lejárraga have something interesting and complex to say, and should be read as such. Interestingly, La Fura dels Baus’ production of “El amor brujo: el fuego y la palabra” (Marineiro 2015, accessed August 2015) in 2015 included Lejárraga as one of the lead characters of the play; showing the most contemporary theatrical recognition of Lejárraga’s overlooked place in Spanish theatre history.

As addressed in the Introduction, there is a question of who the intended audience was for these plays written in exile by Méndez, León and Lejárraga. Returning to Buffery’s point outlined in the Introduction of the problematic nature of discussing the “natural” audience for the plays (Buffery 2011, 3), and the extent to which it is helpful to discuss who their intended audiences were. Whilst these plays have a clear lineage in the theatrical tendencies of Spain’s avant-garde, the question of their possible readership or the absence of readership relates back to their plays as original manifestations of agency under conditions of marginality. In order to explore this question of

the audience more fully I believe a parallel can be drawn between some assertions made by Kristersson on the relevancy of performance of art from a past or unknown tradition, given in a chapter entitled “The Performer in the Empty Space”:

To whom do I want my classical singing to matter? This was the question that I asked myself in the middle of the eighties.

Having thought for a while I realized I wanted my singing to matter, at least to my friends. But they did not understand neither German nor French. Many of them did not like classical singing — some did not even like classical music. So, when I wanted it to communicate what I considered were the deep existential and artistic truths embodied in the *lieder* of Hugo Wolf or in the melodies of Francis Poulenc, I failed. I was not able to communicate the songs that I loved to the people I loved. [...] I discovered that the empty concert stage had very much in common with the theatrical “empty space”, a term coined by the director Peter Brook in the sixties (Brook 1968). Brook referred to the Shakespearean tradition, which does not use much stage decoration, but where the visual moments of the performance actually are created by the images in the poetry of the text, thus making the spectator realize the visual moments of the story in her own fantasy. (Kristersson 2010, 35-6)

On the one hand, as depicted by Buffery, these unperformed plays risk the fate of being read as failed attempts to continue to write plays for a generation and era in Spain that no longer existed. As she termed it of being perceived as: “somehow ‘less than theatre’ because it has largely remained unperformed, or has not had access to its ‘natural’ audiences.” (Buffery 2011, 3) Instead, as shown through the close readings of the plays, these are all plays that fit within the Spanish Republican exile theatre canon deploying similar features

of returning to past modernist and Golden Age theatrical traditions in exile in Latin America and in doing so creating a theatrical space of resistance, in order to convey “deep existential and artistic truths”. These are truths which were written from their vocation as playwrights and need to continue to write regardless of audience. In this sense whether or not their plays were addressed to a non-existent past audience rather than to their contemporary Latin American audience from the 1940-70s, for whom many of the Spanish avant-garde and cultural references had little if no meaning, loses its relevance. Indeed, the omission of these plays from theatre histories is a consequence of this critical perception of them as failed cultural objects, and a result of male dominated historiographies of Spanish theatre. What is experimental about these plays is the way in which they harness their marginality and the absence of performance to make “the spectator realize the visual moments of the story in her own fantasy.” By creating a self-conscious dramatic space in their plays all three authors create a self-conscious space for the readers’ “performance” of the plays in their imagination. In doing so their plays show their resistance in exile and a transformation of their unperformed plays to have an agency of their own.

This connection between memory and its representation is for León, Méndez and Lejárraga a different form of life-writing and one that also merits a critical engagement. Precisely part of the reason why these plays have not been widely critically examined is because they do belong easily to anyone culture. The plays written by these authors in Latin America largely incorporate bygone Spanish traditions but were never seen by a Spanish audience, they occupy a liminal space in the canon which has been made all the more marginal as a result of their gender. With the exception of one, these plays have never been staged and therefore never attained the added prestige that comes from having the text performed. The critical absence surrounding these plays, when compared to their contemporaries such as Max Aub and Federico García Lorca for instance and in contrast to their autobiographies,

implies that their plays lack the calibre of their prose publications. This is in spite of the re-editions of their plays and the move towards a reclaiming of their dramatic texts by a number of critics. This draws an interesting parallel between the writers themselves, who were only too aware of the “impossible” conditions under which they were writing. Yet, they continued to write plays. The failure of these plays is resonant with the failed moment of potential revolution, in the onset of the Civil War and disintegration of the Republican enterprise. This writing is intertwined with political failure, but also I argue, with a playfulness characteristic of the avant-garde in which art becomes a game and perhaps in doing so also becomes subversive.

There is much more research that could be carried out on these three authors and the other plays which could be carried out here. Beginning with Méndez, there are a number of film scripts by Concha Méndez in her archive in La Residencia de Estudiantes, Madrid, which have received no criticism. Indeed, her work as not only a playwright but also a screenwriter is another overlooked area of her writing in exile. Analysis of the following thus far overlooked scripts could be carried out: *Fiesta a bordo* (Méndez 1943); *El porfiado* (Méndez 1944); *Esclava del recuerdo* (Méndez 1952). For León, another play she wrote in exile was a play adaptation of *Misericordia*, *adaptación de la novela homónima de Benito Pérez Galdós* (León 2003), which outside of Nebrera’s analysis has received no criticism. Finally, there are many more plays in Lejárraga’s *Fiesta* collection that merit more analysis, but which outside of the introductions to the republished editions have not received any further critical attention. In particular, it is the second part of the collection, *Televisión sin pantalla* (1960), which has been predominantly overlooked. Plays that could be particularly of interest to furthering the discussion between this tension between her lived experience and writing include: *La cigüeña colectivista*; *Meditación de la alma*; *Lo que hay en un billete de banco* (Martínez Sierra 2009). Another work written in exile that merits more criticism is *Viajes de una gota de agua* (Martínez Sierra 1954).

There are a number of ways the research carried out in this thesis could be further developed. One area of future research would be to more fully investigate the Latin American context the authors were writing in, and the relationship and site of exchange between Latin America and Spain. Another way this research could be further developed is by carrying out a broader historiography of women playwrights and the plays they wrote following the Civil War. Two other obvious choices for these authors would be Halma Angélico (María Francisca Clar Margarit) (1888-1952) and Carlota O'Neill (1888 –1970), whose collections of plays have also been published by ADE in the last few decades. O'Neill's plays, *Circe y los cerdos*; *Cómo fue España encadenada* & *Los que no pudieron huir* (O'Neill 1997), would be particularly relevant to furthering debate on this concept of theatre as a space of testimony, given their political and realist representation of Spain's Civil War. Angélico's plays written during the 1930s also merit more critical attention: *Entre la cruz y el diablo* (1932); *Al margen de la ciudad* (1934) (Angélico 2007), *Ak y la humanidad* (1938) (Angélico 2001). More work could also be carried out on the following playwrights who were writing during Spain's avant-garde years: Matilde Ras (1881-1969); Magda Donato (1898-1966); Mercedes Ballesteros Gaibrois (1913-1995); Pilar Millán-Astray (1879-1949). These are authors worthy of greater critical study because of their commercial success during their lifetime in the theatre and because they continued to write theatre after the outbreak of the Civil War. As with Méndez, León and Lejárraga, they offer another often overlooked addition to Spanish theatre historiography.

Close readings of the extensive bibliographies of Méndez, León and Lejárraga would further develop what has already been established in this thesis, which is the rich complexity of these plays. The analysis of the plays has shown the importance of reading the texts in relation to the other genres written by the authors and also in dialogue with their plays written during the

avant-garde. The plays reveal how the authors blended elements of the avant-garde theatrical tradition alongside their own literary oeuvre to create experimental plays that are unable to be satisfactorily categorised as “teatro de exilio”. The marginality of all three authors as a consequence of being women and the added complexity of living in exile, and their knowledge of the difficulty of getting their plays performed creates a subversive dramatic space of self-consciousness. These plays offer new possibilities for adding to Spain’s theatrical historiography of the twentieth century, which has been historically dominated by the same predominantly male authors. This thesis has shown the rich potential for further exploring lesser known plays as important cultural objects in further discussing memory and exile from an alternative and gendered perspective. The playful nature that characterises all of the texts shows that unperformed Spanish Republican plays written in exile can be affirmative, experimental and irreverent. As such the plays challenge the more dominant narratives of exile literature as homogeneously melancholic or nostalgic. Whilst memory and marginality are important features of their plays, they are connected to all three authors’ emancipation; which had begun during the avant-garde, and continued in exile. These plays reveal an important dramatic space for Méndez, León and Lejárraga to use their writing as a space of resistance. Following a similar approach of a gendered reading of Spanish women authors and their plays written in exile would also work well for the above outlined authors. In order to reveal the rich potential of close readings of Spanish exile plays and the importance of doing so in order to further address the male focus of Spanish theatre historiographies of the twentieth century.

Bibliography

- Abel, Lionel. 1963. *Metatheatre: A New View of Dramatic Form*. New York: Hill and Wang.
- Alberti, Rafael. 2004. *Noche de Guerra En El Museo de Prado; El Hombre Deshabitado*. Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva.
- . 1992. *De Un Momento a Otro; El Adefesio*. Madrid: Cátedra.
- Altolaguirre, Paloma Ulacia. 1990. *Concha Méndez: Memorias habladas, memorias armadas*. Madrid: Mondadori.
- . 1990. "Prólogo". In *Concha Méndez: Memorias habladas, memorias armadas*, by Paloma Ulacia Altolaguirre, 15-23. Madrid: Mondadori.
- Angélico, Halma. 2007. *Entre La Cruz y El Diablo. Al Margen de La Ciudad*. Edited by Ivana Rota. Serie: Literatura Dramática Iberoamericana no. 55. Madrid: ADE: Publicaciones de la Asociación de directores de escena de España.
- . 2001. *Ak y la humanidad*. Edited by Fernando Doménech. Serie: Literatura Dramática Iberoamericana no. 33. Madrid: ADE: Publicaciones de la Asociación de directores de escena de España.
- Autoras en la historia del teatro español (1500-1994)*. 1996-7. Trabajo de investigación dirigido por Juan Antonio Hormigón. Madrid: ADE: Asociación de Directores de Escena en España.
- Aznar Soler, Manuel. 2003b. "Introducción." In María Teresa León, *Teatro: La libertad en el tejado, Sueño y verdad de Francisco de Goya*, estudio introductorio y notas de Manuel Aznar Soler. 9-91. Sevilla: Renacimiento.
- . 1993. "María Teresa León y El Teatro Español Durante La Guerra Civil." *Anthropos. Revista de Documentación Científica de La Cultura Guerra Civil y producción cultural*. Teatro, poesía y narrativa (148): 25-34.

- . 2001. "Presentación." In *El Exilio Literario de 1939. Actas Del Congreso Internacional Celebrado En La Universidad de La Rioja Del 2 Al 5 de Noviembre de 1999.*, edited by María Teresa González de Garay Fernández and Juan Aguilera Sastre, 13–15. La Rioja. 1999. Actas VIII. Logroño: Universidad de La Rioja y GEXEL.
- Balfour, Michael. 2001. "Theatre and Politics of the Mussolini Regime." In *Theatre and War 1933- 1945: Performance in Extremis*, edited by Michael Balfour, 21–31. New York & Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- Baur, Sergio. 2005. "La Argentina que vivió María Teresa León." In *Memoria de la Hermosura*, edited by Olga Álvarez de Armas, 87–114. España: Fundación Autor, Iberautor Promociones Culturales.
- Bellver, Catherine G. 2001. "Los exilios y las sombras en la poesía de Concha Méndez." In *Una Mujer Moderna. Concha Méndez en su mundo (1898-1986)*, edited by James Valender, 193– 206. Actas del seminario internacional celebrado en la Residencia de Estudiantes en mayo de 1998 con motivo del centenario del nacimiento de Concha Méndez / [por] Concha Méndez [et al]. Madrid: Amigos de la Residencia de Estudiantes.
- Bergmann, Emilie L., & Richard Herr, eds. 2007. *Mirrors and Echoes: Women's Writing in Twentieth-century Spain*. California: University of California Press.
- Bernard, Margherita. 2011. "Introducción." In *Concha Méndez, La Caña y el Tabaco, Alegoría*, by Concha Méndez, 9–70. Literatura Dramática Iberoamericana 64. Madrid: ADE: Publicaciones de la Asociación de directores de escena de España.
- . 2012. "Nuevos modelos: Representaciones de la mujer en las obras de Concha Méndez." In *Imágenes femeninas en la literatura española y las artes escénicas (siglos XX-XXI)*, 51–67. Philadelphia, PA: Society of Spanish and Spanish-American studies.
- Bilbatúa, M. 1976. *Teatro de agitación política 1933-1939: Rafael Alberti; Germán Bleiberg; Rafael Dieste; Miguel Hernández; María Teresa León*. Madrid: Editorial Cuadernos para el Diálogo.
- Blanco, Alda. 1986. "In Their Chosen Place: On the Autobiographies of Two Spanish Women of the Left." *Genre*, 19: 431–51.

- . 1999. *María Martínez Sierra (1874-1974)*. Madrid: Ediciones del Otro.
- . 2002. “Una Mujer Por Caminos de España: María Martínez Sierra y La Política.” In *María Martínez Sierra y La República: Ilusión y Compromiso: II Jornadas Sobre María Lejárraga*, 173–88. Logroño, 23- 25 de octubre y 6-8 de noviembre de 2001. Logroño: Instituto de Estudios Riojanos.
- Braun, Harald E, and Lisa Vollendorf, eds. 2013. *Theorising the Ibero-American Atlantic*. Brill.
- Brockington, Grace. 2007. “‘A World Fellowship’: The Founding of the International Lyceum Club for Women Artists and Writers.” *International Association of Lyceum Clubs*.
http://www.lyceumclub.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=62&Itemid=114&lang=en.
- Brown, Hilda Meldrum. 1991. *Leitmotiv and Drama. Wagner, Brecht, and the Limits of “Epic” Theatre*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Bryant-Bertail, Sarah. 2000. *Space and Time in Epic Theatre: The Brechtian Legacy*. USA: Camden House.
- Buffery, Helena. 2011. *Stages of Exile : Spanish Republican Exile Theatre and Performance*. Oxford; New York: Peter Lang.
- Calderón de la Barca, Pedro. 1980. *Teatro: El Alcalde de Zalamea, La vida es sueño, El gran teatro del mundo*. Edited by Amando Isasi Angulo. 4a ed. S.A: Editorial Brugera.
- Castle, Terry. 1986. *Masquerade and Civilization: The Carnavalesque in Eighteenth-century English Culture and Fiction*. London: Methuen & Co Ltd.
- Cavallo, Pietro. 2001. “Theatre and Politics of the Mussolini Regime.” In *Theatre and War 1933- 1945: Performance in Extremis*, edited by Michael Balfour, 21–31. New York & Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- Chambers, Colin. 2002. *The Continuum Companion to Twentieth Century Theatre*. First Edition. London: Continuum.

- Checa Puerta, Julio Enrique. 1998. *Los teatros de Gregorio Martínez Sierra*. Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española.
- Deacon, Philip. 2005. "Spain and Enlightenment." In *The Cambridge History of Spanish Literature*, edited by David T Gies, 291–306. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- De Armas, Frederick A., David M. Gitlitz, & Jose A. Madrigal, eds. 1981. *Critical Perspectives on Calderon de La Barca*. USA: Society of Spanish and Spanish-American Studies.
- De Lamartine, Alfonso. 2010. *Graziella: A Story of Italian Love*. Translated by James B. Runnion. First edition 1875. Kessinger Publishing, LLC.
- Delgado, Maria M. 2007. "Beyond the Muse: The Spanish Actress as Collaborator." In *The Cambridge Companion to the Actress*, and John Stokes, edited by Maggie B Gale. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 2003. *"Other" Spanish Theatres Erasure and Inscription on the Twentieth-Century Spanish Stage*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press.
- . 2011. "Performing Exile: María Casares." In *Stages of Exile: Spanish Republican Exile Theatre and Performance*, edited by Helena Buffery, 203–227. Oxford, Bern, Berlin, Bruxelles, Frankfurt am Main, New York, Wien: Peter Lang.
- . 2007. "The Actress and the Playwright: Historiographical Models of Collaboration." *Anales de La Literatura Española Contemporánea* 32 (2): 365–94.
- De La Fuente, Inmaculada. 2002. *Mujeres de la posguerra: De Carmen Laforet a Rosa Chacel Historia de Una Generación*. España: Planeta.
- Dennis, Nigel. 1998. "Lorca y la crisis de la palabra." In *Federico García Lorca En El Espejo Del Tiempo*, edited by Pedro Guerrero Ruiz, 19–30. Editorial Aguacilara.
- . and James Valender. 2002. "Luis Cernuda, la II República y las Misiones Pedagógicas (1931-1936)." In *Entre la realidad y el deseo, Luis Cernuda 1902-1963*, 235–52.

- . 2007. "Politics." In *A Companion to Federico García Lorca*, edited by Federico Bonaddio, 170–89. Great Britain: Tamesis.
- . 1999. "Spanish Writers in Exile: Mexico, 1939-1947." *Romance Quarterly* 46 (1): 3–4.
- . 2011. "The Civil War in Exile: Poetry and Politics in Jose Bergamín's La Niña Guerrillera." In *Stages of Exile: Spanish Republican Exile Theatre and Performance*, edited by Helena Buffery, 31–56. Oxford: Peter Lang.
- de Vega, Lope. 2016. "Deleite y Doctrina." *Cervantes Virtual*. April.
http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra-visor/significado-y-doctrina-del-arte-nuevo-de-lope-de-vega-0/html/ff8d7e8e-82b1-11df-acc7-002185ce6064_7.html).
- "Diccionario de la lengua española." 2015. *Real Academia Española*.
<http://lema.rae.es/drae/?val=fantasia>.
- Eliot, T.S. 1915. "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." *Poetry Foundation*.
<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poem/173476>.
- Emiliozzi, Irma. 2005. "María Teresa León, actriz cinematográfica." In *Memoria de la Hermosura*, edited by Olga Álvarez de Armas, 129–40. Spain: Fundación Autor, Iberautor Promociones Culturales.
- Engeli, Isabelle, & Allison, Christine Rothmayr. 2014. *Comparative Policy Studies: Conceptual and Methodological Challenges*. Houndsmills: Palgrave Mcmillan Publishers Ltd.
- Estébanez Gil, Juan Carlos. 2003. "María Teresa León: de Sus Inicios Literarios Al Exilio Argentino." In *Homenaje a María Teresa León En Su Centenario*, edited by G Santonja, 29-42. España: Sociedad Estatal de Conmemoraciones Culturales.
- . 2003. *María Teresa León: Escritura, Compromiso y Memoria*. Colección Beltenebros. Burgos: Fundación Instituto Castellano Leonés de la Lengua.
- . 1995. *María Teresa León: Estudio de su obra literaria*. Burgos: Editorial "La Olmeada".

- Farnsworth, May Summer. 2009. "Sex Work, Sickness, and Suicide: Argentine Feminist Theatre in the 1910s and 1920s."
<http://hemisphericinstitute.org/hemi/en/e-Misferica-61/farnsworth>.
- Fernandez Shaw, Felix. "Teatro lírico español." Madrid: Biblioteca Fundación Juan March.
- Floeck, Wilfried. 2008. *Estudios críticos sobre el teatro español, mexicano y portugués contemporáneo*. New York, Zurich: Georg Olms Verlag.
- Fothergill-Payne, Louise. 1977. *La alegoría en los autos y farsas anteriores a Calderón*. London: Tamesis Books Limited.
- Freud, Sigmund. 1987. *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Edited by Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House Publishers.
- Fuente Ballesteros, Ricardo de la & Amezúa, Ricardo de la. 2002. *Diccionario Del Teatro Iberoamericano*. España: Ediciones Almar.
- Gabriele, John P. 1994. *De lo particular a lo universal. El teatro español del Siglo XX y su contexto*. Frankfurt & Madrid: Vervuert Verlag & Iberoamericana.
- Gesser, Silvina Schammah. 2015. *Madrid's Forgotten Avant-Garde: Between Essentialism and Modernity*. Brighton; Chicago: Sussex Academic Press.
- Gómez-Agero, Gonzalo Santonja, ed. 2003. *Homenaje a María Teresa León en su Centenario*. Madrid: Sociedad Estatal de Conmemoraciones Culturales.
- Gómez García, Manuel. 1997. "Metateatro." *Diccionario del teatro*. Madrid: Ediciones Akal, S.A.
- González de Garay Fernández, María Teresa. 2012. "María Teresa León: sobre la historia de mi corazón." *Anales de la literatura española contemporánea*. 37 (2): 249–74.
- . 2009. "Estudio Introductorio a Las Peregrinaciones de Teresa." In *Las Peregrinaciones de Teresa*, by María Teresa León, edited by María Teresa González de Garay, 13–99. Logroño: Instituto de Estudios Riojanos.

- González, Gabriel. 1987. *Drama y teología en el siglo de oro*. Ediciones Universidad Salamanca. Salamanca: Biblioteca de Pensamiento y Sociedad 60.
- González Peña, María Luz. 2009. *Música y músicos en la vida de María Lejárraga*. Logroño: Gobierno de la roja.
- Halsey, Martha T, & Zatlin, Phyllis. 1998. "Beyond Lorca." Edited by Maria M Delgado. "Spanish Theatre 1920-1995. Strategies in Protest and Imagination", *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 7 (2): 133–77.
- Harris, D. 1995. *The Spanish Avant-Garde*. Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press.
- Highfill, Juli. 2014. *Modernism and Its Merchandise: The Spanish Avant-Garde and Material Culture, 1920-1930*. University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Homenaje a María Teresa León*. 1995. Granada: Ayuntamiento de Granada Mujer & Cultura.
- Hormigón, Juan Antonio, ed. 1996–1997. *Autoras En La Historia Del Teatro Español (1500-1994)*. Vol. i. Madrid: Asociación de Directores de Escena en España.
- . 1996–1997. *Autoras En La Historia Del Teatro Español (1500-1994)*. Vol. ii. Madrid, España: Asociación de Directores de Escena en España.
- . 2000. *Autoras En La Historia Del Teatro Español (1500-2000: Siglo XX (1975-2000))*. Vol. iii. Madrid: Directores de Escena en España.
- . 2000. *Autoras En La Historia Del Teatro Español (1500-2000: Siglo XX (1975-2000))*. Vol. iv. Madrid: Asociación de Directores de Escena en España.
- . 2004. "Casi un melodrama. Notas de la escenificación de *La historia de mi madre*." *Revista de la Asociación de Directores de Escena de España*, Marzo. Madrid: ADE: Publicaciones de la Asociación de directores de escena de España.

- Ilie, Paul. 1980. *Literature and Inner Exile: Authoritarian Spain, 1939-1975*. Baltimore & London: The John Hopkins University Press.
- Isasi Angulo, Amando. 1980. "Presentación" In *Teatro: El alcalde de Zalamea, La vida es Sueño, El gran teatro del mundo*, by Pedro Calderón de la Barca, cuarto, 197–212. Barcelona: Editorial Bruguera, S.A.
- Iser, Wolfgang. 1989. *Prospecting. From Reader Response to Literary Anthropology*. Baltimore & London: The John Hopkins University Press.
- Jacobs, Karen. 2001. "Introduction: Modernism and the Body as Afterimage." In *The Eye's Mind: Literary Modernism and Visual Culture*, 1–44. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.
- Johnson, Roberta. 2003. *Gender and Nation in the Spanish Modernist Novel*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press.
- Jung, Carl Gustav. 2002. *The Undiscovered Self*. Kindle edition. English edition first published 1958 by Routledge & Kegan Paul. First Routledge Classics edition published 2002. Routledge Classics (2002) & Routledge Great Minds (2014). New York: Routledge.
- Kamen, Henry. 2008. *The Disinherited: The Exiles Who Created Spanish Culture*. Penguin UK.
- Karush, Matthew B. 2012. *Culture of Class: Radio and Cinema in the Making of a Divided Argentina, 1920- 1946*. USA: Duke University Press.
- Kasten, Carey. 2012. *The Cultural Politics of Twentieth-Century Spanish Theatre: Representing the Auto Sacramental*. Lewisburg [Pa.]: Bucknell University Press; Lanham, Md. : Co-published with Rowman & Littlefield Pub. Group.
- Kirkpatrick, Susan. 2003. *Mujer, Modernismo Y Vanguardia En España (1898-1931)*. Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra.
- Kristersson, Sven. 2010. "The Performer in the Empty Space." In *Expression in the Performing Arts*, edited by Imma Álvarez and Francisca Héctor J. Pérez, 35–49. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. <https://goo.gl/4xgozf>.

- Labanyi, Jo. 1998. *Rescuing the Living Dead from the Dustbin of History: Popular Memory and Postwar Trauma in Contemporary Spanish Film and Fiction*. Occasional Papers Series 25. Bristol: University of Bristol: Department of Hispanic, Portuguese and Latin American Studies.
- Leggott, Sarah. 2008. "Concha Méndez (1898-1986), Memorias habladas, memorias armadas: The Female Intellectual and the 'Generation of 1927.'" In *The Workings of Memory: Life-writing by Women in Early Twentieth-Century Spain*, 118–41. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press.
- . "The Female Intellectual in 1920s Madrid: Writing the Lyceum Club." *AUMILA, Journal of the Australasian Universities Language and Literature Association*, 110: 95–112.
- Leitch, Vincent B., Paul Daub Sutton, & Carol Daub Sutton, eds. 2001. "Julia Kristeva." In *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, First Edition, 2165–79. USA: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.
- León, María Teresa and Rafael, Alberti. 1990. *Homenaje a María Teresa León*. Madrid: Universidad Complutense de Madrid.
- León, María Teresa. 2000. *Juego Limpio*. Madrid: Consejería de Educación.
- . 2008. *La historia de mi corazón*. Edited by Gabriele Morelli. Málaga: Centro Cultural Generación del 27.
- . 2003a. "La historia de mi madre." In *Obras dramáticas y escritos sobre teatro de María Teresa León*, edited by Gregorio Torres Nebrera. 292–305. Literatura Dramática Iberoamericana 39. Madrid: Publicaciones de la Asociación de Directores de Escena de España.
- . 1998. *Memoria de la Melancolía*. Edited by Torres Nebrera Gregorio. Madrid: Castalia.
- . 2003a. "Misericordia, adaptación de María Teresa León de la novela homónima de Benito Pérez Galdós." In *Obras dramáticas y escritos sobre teatro de María Teresa León*, edited by Gregorio Torres Nebrera, 94–182. Literatura Dramática Iberoamericana 39. Madrid: Publicaciones de la Asociación de Directores de Escena de España.

- .2003a. *Obras dramáticas y Escritos sobre teatro de María Teresa León*, edited by Gregorio Torres Nebrera. Literatura Dramática Iberoamericana 39. Madrid: Publicaciones de la Asociación de Directores de Escena de España
- .2003b. *Teatro: La Libertad En El Tejado, Sueño y Verdad de Francisco*. Edited by Manuel Aznar Soler. Sevilla: Renacimiento.
- Lorca, Federico García. 1990. *Amor de don Perlimplín con Belisa en su jardín*. Letras hispánicas, 313. Madrid: Catedra.
- .2009. *Bodas de sangre*. Translated by Paul Burns and Salvador Ortiz-Carboneres. Oxford: Oxbow Books.
- .2009. “Introducción.” In *El público*, Novena edición. Letras Hispánicas Madrid: Catedra.
- . 1983. *La Casa de Bernada Alba*. Madrid: Castalia.
- Loureiro, Ángel G. 2005. “María Teresa León. Las ruinas de la memoria.” In *María Teresa León: Memoria de la hermosura*, 203–27. Madrid: Fundación Autor. Iberautor Promociones Culturales.
- Macías, Anna. 1982. *Against All Odds. The Feminist Movement in Mexico to 1940*. USA: Greenwood Press.
- Magallón, Jesús-Pérez. 2014. *The Transatlantic Hispanic Baroque: Complex Identities in the Atlantic World*. Edited by Harald E Braun. Ash gate.
- Mainer, José-Carlos. 1990. “Las Escritoras Del 27 (con María Teresa León Al Fondo).” In *Homenaje a María Teresa León*, 13–39. El Escorial: Universidad de Complutense de Madrid.
- Marcos, Ana. 1989. “María Teresa León, una mujer comprometida con su tiempo.” In *Homenaje a María Teresa León*, 41–52. Cursos de Verano. El Escorial. Madrid: Universidad de Complutense de Madrid.
- Maria M Delgado and David T Gies (eds). 2012. *A History of Theatre in Spain*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Marina, José Antonio & Rodríguez de Castro, María Teresa. 2009. *La Conspiración de Las Lectoras*. Barcelona: Editorial Anagrama.
- Marinero, Cristina. 2015. "La fura hace justicia a María Lejárraga convirtiéndola en la protagonista de 'El Amor Brujo.'" *El Mundo*. September 15.
<http://www.elmundo.es/cultura/2015/07/09/559e2db046163fda728b456d.html>
- Martínez, Josebe. 2007. *Exiliadas: Escritos, Guerra civil y memoria*. España: Ediciones de Intervención Cultural.
- Martínez Sierra, Gregorio. 1917. *Feminismo, Feminidad, Españolismo*. Madrid: Renacimiento.
- Martínez Sierra, María. 2006. *Ante la república: conferencias y entrevistas de María Martínez Sierra (1931-2)*, edited by Juan Aguilera Sastre. Logroño: Instituto de estudios riojanos.
- . 2009. "El amor vuela. Farsa con coros, en seis cuadros. Hablando con el lector." In *Tragedia de la perra vida y otras diversiones. Teatro del exilio (1939-1974)*, edited by Juan Aguilera Sastre & Isabel Lizarraga Vizcarra, 1st ed., 105–10. Biblioteca Del Exilio. Sevilla: Renacimiento.
- . 2009. "Explicación Breve." In *Tragedia de la perra vida y otras diversiones. Teatro del exilio (1939-1974)*, edited by Juan Aguilera Sastre & Isabel Lizarraga Vizcarra, 1st ed., 405-6. Biblioteca Del Exilio. Sevilla: Renacimiento.
- . 2000. *Gregorio y Yo: medio siglo de colaboración*. Edited by Alda Blanco. Valencia: Pre-Textos.
- . 1953. *Gregorio y Yo: medio siglo de colaboración*. México: Gandesa.
- . 2009. "Fantasías Líricas. Sueños en la Venta. Cuadro Lírico Bailable." In *Tragedia de la perra vida y otras diversiones. Teatro del exilio (1939-1974)*, edited by Juan Aguilera Sastre & Isabel Lizarraga Vizcarra, 1st ed., 345–51. Biblioteca Del Exilio. Sevilla: Renacimiento.
- . 2009. "La Cigüeña Colectivista (Verdad y Cuento)." In *Tragedia de la perra vida y otras diversiones. Teatro del exilio (1939-1974)*, edited by Juan

- Aguilera Sastre & Isabel Lizarraga Vizcarra, 1st ed., 483–92. Biblioteca Del Exilio. Sevilla: Renacimiento.
- . 2009. “Lo que hay en un billete de banco.” In *Tragedia de la perra vida y otras diversiones. Teatro del exilio (1939-1974)*, edited by Juan Aguilera Sastre & Isabel Lizarraga Vizcarra, 1st ed., 525–28. Biblioteca del exilio. Sevilla: Renacimiento.
- . 2009. “Muerte de la locura. Sueño de la última noche de carnaval. Motivos líricos para un ballet.” In *Tragedia de la perra vida y otras diversiones. Teatro del exilio (1939-1974)*, edited by Juan Aguilera Sastre & Isabel Lizarraga Vizcarra, 1st ed., 397–401. Biblioteca del Exilio. Sevilla: Renacimiento.
- . 2003. “Texto Teatral: Un Cobarde.” *Estreno: Cuadernos Del Teatro Español Contemporáneo XXIX* (1): 13–18.
- . 2009. “Tragedia de la perra vida fiesta en el olimpo.” In *Tragedia de la perra vida y otras diversiones. Teatro del exilio (1939-1974)*, edited by Juan Aguilera Sastre and Isabel Lizarraga Vizcarra, 1st ed., 73–103. Biblioteca del Exilio. Sevilla: Renacimiento.
- . 2009. *Tragedia de la perra vida y otras diversiones. Teatro del exilio (1939-1974)*. Edited by Juan Aguilera Sastre and Isabel Lizarraga Vizcarra. Biblioteca Del Exilio. Sevilla: Renacimiento.
- . 1952. *Una mujer por caminos de España: Recuerdos de una Propagandista*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada.
- . 1989. *Una mujer por caminos de España: Recuerdos de una Propagandista*. Edited by Alda Blanco. Madrid: Castalia.
- . 1954. *Viajes de una gota de agua*. Buenos Aires: Librería Hachette.
- Mayo, Alberto Porqueras. 1968. *El prólogo en el manierismo y barroco españoles*. Madrid: Bolaños y Aguilar.
- McCarthy, Jim. 1999. *Political Theatre during the Spanish Civil War*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.

McFatridge, Kylie. 2015. "Sexuality". Psychological History of Women. *Sexuality*.
<http://psychistofwomen.umwblogs.org/sexuality/>.

McKendrick, Merveena. 1974. *Woman and Society in the Spanish Drama of the Golden Drama. A Study of the Mujer Varonil*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Méndez, Concha. 2001. "Concha Méndez (1967)." In *Una mujer moderna, Concha Méndez en su mundo (1898-1986)*, edited by James Valender, 15–22. Actas Del Seminario Internacional Celebrado en La Residencia de Estudiantes. Mayo de 1998 con Motivo del Centenario del Nacimiento de Concha Méndez. Madrid: Amigos de la Residencia de Estudiantes.

———. 2001. "Concha Méndez Cuesta, Poetisa Española, Publica Un Libro En Buenos Aires (1930)." In *Una Mujer Moderna, Concha Méndez en su mundo (1898- 1986)*, edited by James Valender, 51–53. Actas del seminario internacional celebrado en la Residencia de Estudiantes en mayo de 1998 con motivo del centenario del nacimiento de Concha Méndez. Madrid: Amigos de la Residencia de Estudiantes.

———. 2001. "Conchita Mendez, Deportista, Poetisa y Cineasta (1927). Txibirisco." In *Una mujer moderna, Concha Méndez en su mundo (1898-1986)*, edited by James Valender, 23-26. Actas del seminario internacional celebrado en la Residencia de Estudiantes en mayo de 1998 con motivo del centenario del nacimiento de Concha Méndez. Madrid: Amigos de la Residencia de Estudiantes.

———. 2001. "Discurso Pronunciado Por La Poeta Concha Méndez Cuesta Para Agradecer El Homenaje." In *Una mujer moderna, Concha Méndez en su mundo (1898- 1986)*, edited by James Valender, 55–62. Actas del seminario internacional celebrado en la Residencia de Estudiantes en mayo de 1998 con motivo del centenario del nacimiento de Concha Méndez. Madrid: Amigos de la Residencia de Estudiantes.

———. 1935. *El carbón y la rosa. Teatro infantil de Concha Méndez*. Madrid: Imp. De C. Méndez y M. Altolaguirre.

———. 2006. *El pez engañado, Ha corrido una Estrella, Las barandillas del cielo*. Edited by Margherita Bernard. Literatura Dramática Iberoamericana 49.

Madrid: ADE: Publicaciones de la Asociación de directores de escena de España.

- . 1931. *El personaje presentado y El ángel cartero*. Madrid: Imp. Galo Sáez.
- . 1944. “El porfiado.” México. Archivo de Concha Méndez. Residencia de Estudiantes. Madrid.
- . 1935. “El solitario. Momento de Soledad.” México. “Archivo de Concha Méndez”. Residencia de Estudiantes. Madrid.
- . 1945. “El solitario. Momento de Soledad.” *América*, October 31.
- . 1998. *El solitario. Misterio en un acto*. Edición facsimile. Biblioteca del 27. Colección El Público 1. Spain: Caballo Griego para la Poesía.
- . 1952. “Esclava Del Recuerdo.” México. Archivo de Concha Méndez. Residencia de Estudiantes. Madrid.
- . 1944. “Fiesta a bordo.” México. Archivo de Concha Méndez. Residencia de Estudiantes. Madrid.
- . 2001. “Historia de un teatro (1942).” In *Una mujer moderna, Concha Méndez en su mundo (1898- 1986)*, edited by James Valender, 63–77. Actas del seminario internacional celebrado en la Residencia de Estudiantes en mayo de 1998 con motivo del centenario del nacimiento de Concha Méndez. Madrid: Amigos de la Residencia de Estudiantes.
- . 2011. *La caña y el tabaco alegoría antillana*. Edited by Margherita Bernard. Literatura Dramática Iberoamericana 64. Madrid: ADE: Publicaciones de la Asociación de directores de escena de España.
- . 1936. *Niño y sombras*. First edition. Madrid: La Verónica.
- . 1944. *Sombras y sueños*. First edition. Mexico: La Verónica.
- . 2001. “Una visita a Elstree (1929).” In *Una Mujer Moderna, Concha Méndez En Su Mundo (1898- 1986)*, edited by James Valender, 39–46. Actas del seminario internacional celebrado en la Residencia de Estudiantes en

- mayo de 1998 con motivo del centenario del nacimiento de Concha Méndez. Madrid: Amigos de la Residencia de Estudiantes.
- Millán, María Clementa. 2009. "Introducción." In *El público*, by Francisco García Lorca, Novena edición. Letras Hispánicas. Madrid: Catedra.
- Miró, Emilio. 2001. "El personaje presentado, de Concha Méndez." In *Una mujer moderna. Concha Méndez en su mundo (1898- 1986)*, edited by James Valender, 177–91. Madrid: La Residencia de Estudiantes.
- Monleón, José. 1989. "Lectura histórica del pensamiento teatral de María Teresa León." In *Homenaje a María Teresa León*, 53–64. España: Cursos de verano en El Escorial.
- . 2005. "María Teresa León: Revolución y Melancolía." In *Escritores, Editoriales y Revistas del Exilio Republicano de 1939*, edited by Manuel Aznar Soler. Biblioteca del exilio. Sevilla: GEXEL.
- Montaigne, Michel de. 1877. "To the Reader." Essays of Michel de Montaigne — Complete by Michel de Montaigne. *Project Gutenberg*.
http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/3600?msg=welcome_stranger#link2H_4_003.
- Montero, Luis García. 2000. "La Pasión de la Memoria". In María Teresa León, *Juego Limpio*. 7-18. Madrid: Consejería de Educación.
- Montero, Rosa. 1995. "The Silent Revolution: The Social and Cultural Advances of Women in Democratic Spain." In *Spanish Cultural Studies: An Introduction: The Struggle for Modernity*, edited by H. G. J. Labanyi and Helen Graham, 55. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Morelli, Gabriele. 2008. "Prólogo: Historia del texto." In *La historia de mi corazón*, 11–21. Málaga: Centro Cultural Generación del 27.
- Moreno, C. D. Z. A. 1993. *Ni convento ni college. La Residencia de Señoritas*. Madrid: Publicaciones de la Residencia de Estudiantes.
- Morgan, Margot. 2013. "Bertolt Brecht: The Theatre of Proletarian Revolution." In *Politics and Theatre in Twentieth-Century Europe: Imagination and Resistance*, 49–85. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Muñoz, Luis. 2005. "Memoria de la Melancolía." In *María Teresa León memoria de la hermosura*, edited by Olga Álvarez de Armas, 161–70. Iberautor Promociones Culturales. España: Fundación Autor.
- Nash, Mary. 1999. "Un/Contested Identities: Motherhood, Sex Reform and the Modernization of Gender Identity in Early Twentieth-Century Spain." In *Constructing Spanish Womanhood: Female Identity in Modern Spain*, edited by Victoria Lorée Enders and Pamela Beth Radcliff, 25–50. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Nebrera, Gregorio Torres. 1996. *Los espacios de la memoria (La obra literaria de María Teresa León)*. Madrid: Ediciones de la Torre.
- Nebrera, Gregorio Torres. 2003a. "María Teresa León, autora teatral." In *Obras dramáticas y escritos sobre teatro de María Teresa León*, First, 13–69. Literatura Dramática Iberoamericana 39. Madrid, España: ADE: Publicaciones de la Asociación de directores de escena de España.
- Neruda, Pablo. n.d. "Explico Algunas Cosas." Universidad de Chile. *Pablo Neruda*. <http://www.neruda.uchile.cl/obra/obraresidencia3d.html>.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. 2010. "The Gay Science." In *Nietzsche Love of Fate Series*, translated by Thomas Common, Kindle edition, Location: 1442. Version 4.67. William A. Chapko.
- Nieva de la Paz, Pilar. 2001. "El teatro infantil de Concha Méndez." In *Una mujer moderna. Concha Méndez en su mundo (1898-1986)*, edited by James Valender, 165-76. Actas del seminario internacional celebrado en la Residencia de Estudiantes en mayo de 1998 con motivo del centenario del nacimiento de Concha Méndez / [por] Concha Méndez [et al]. Madrid: Amigos de la Residencia de Estudiantes.
- . and Pilar Nieva de La Paz. 2012. "Imágenes Femeninas En La Literatura Española Y Las Artes Escénicas (Siglos XX Y XXI)." *Society of Spanish and Spanish-American Studies*.

- . 1992. “La Presencia de La Mujer en el Teatro Español entre 1918 Y 1936.” Tesis doctoral dirigida por María Francisca Vilches de Frutos., Madrid: Universidad Autónoma de Madrid.
- . 1999. “María Teresa León y El Teatro.” ADE Teatro. *Revista de La Asociación de Directores de España*, Teatro de la España del siglo XX. 1900-1939. 33-9. October.
- . 2006. “Voz Autobiográfica e Identidad Profesional: Las Escritoras Españolas de La Generación Del 27.” *Hispania* 89 (1): 20–26.
- Nigro, Kirsten F. 1996. “Theatre, Women, and Mexican Society: A Few Exemplary Cases.” In *Perspectives on Contemporary Spanish American Theatre*, edited by Frank Dauster, 35–48. London: Bucknell Review.
- O’Connor, Patricia W. 1972. “A Spanish Precursor to Women’s Lib: The Heroine in Gregorio Martínez Sierra’s Theater.” *Hispania* 55 (4): 865–72.
- . 1975. “Death of Gregorio Martínez Sierra’s Co-Author.” *Hispania* 58 (1): 210–11.
- . 1977. *Gregorio and María Martínez Sierra*. Boston: Twayne Publishers.
- . 1978. “Spain’s First Successful Woman Dramatist: María Martínez Sierra.” *Hispanófila* 66 (Autumn): 87–108.
- . 1996. *Women in the Theater of Gregorio Martínez Sierra*. New York: The American Press Publications.
- . 2000. “Los Exilios de María Martínez Sierra.” In *El Exilio Literario Asturiano de 1939*, edited by Antonio Fernández Insuela, 277–87. Oviedo: Universidad de Oviedo.
- . 2003. *Mito y realidad de una dramaturga española: María Martínez Sierra*. Logroño: Instituto de Estudios Riojanos.
- . 2008a. “Dos Cartas Inéditas de María Lejárraga Dirigidas a Gregorio Martínez Sierra.” *Signa* 17: 283–91.

- . 2008b. “María Martínez Sierra en sus espejos: Reflejos de una vida.” In *María Martínez Sierra: feminismo y música*, edited by Juan Aguilera Sastre, 17–30. Logroño: Instituto de Estudios Riojanos.
- . 1978. “Spain’s First Successful Woman Dramatist: María Martínez Sierra.” *Hispanófila* 66 (Fall): 87–108.
- Olivares, César Olivia. 2003. La práctica escénica de María Teresa León. In *Homenaje a María Teresa León en su centenario*, edited by G. Santonja. Madrid: Sociedad Estatal de Conmemoraciones Culturales.
- O’Neill, Carlotta. 1997. *Circe Y Los Circus. Como fue España encadenada. Los que no pudieron huir*. Edited by Juan Antonio Hormigón. Literatura Dramática Iberoamericana 16. Madrid: ADE: Publicaciones de la Asociación de directores de escena de España.
- Ortega y Gasset, José. 1957. *España invertebrada* 10th edition. Madrid: Revista de Occidente, S.A.
- . 1925. *La deshumanización del arte*. 11^a edición 1987. Madrid: Ed. Espasa Calpe.
- Ortiz, Itziar. P. 2007. “El Testamento de Atenea.” In *Mujer, Historia Y Sociedad: La Dramaturgia Española Contemporánea de Autoría Femenina*, by W. L. Zaza. Kassel: Edition Reichenberger.
- “Out of the Wings.” 2012. *Pedro Calderón de La Barca*. www.outofthewings.org.
- Owen, Wilfred. 1917. “Anthem For Doomed Youth.” Poetry Foundation. <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/176831>.
- Peral Vega, Emilio. 2015. *Pierrot-Lorca: White Carnival of Black Desire*. Woodbridge: Tamesis.
- . 2008a. “Los Autores y las obras. Del Modernismo a la Guerra Civil. García Lorca.” In *Historia del Teatro Breve en España*, edited by Javier Huerta Calvo, 1093–1104. Iberoamericana: Vervuert Verlagsgesellschaft.

- . 2008a. “Los Autores y las obras. Del Modernismo a la Guerra Civil. Martínez Sierra.” In *Historia del Teatro Breve en España*, edited by Javier Huerta Calvo, 1082–88. Iberoamericana: Vervuert Verlagsgesellschaft.
- . 2008b. *De un Teatro sin palabras. La Pantomima en España de 1890 a 1939*. Anthropos.
- Pérez de Ayala, Juan. 1999. “Historia de un taxi (1927) La aventura cinematográfica de Concha Méndez.” *Revista de Occidente*, Madrid, no. 211: 103–28.
- Pérez-Rasilla, Eduardo. 1996. “El Teatro de María Martínez Sierra, Una Tentativa de Análisis Global.” In *María Martínez Sierra teatro escogido*, edited by Eduardo Pérez-Rasilla, 21–62. Teatro Escogido, Literatura Dramática Iberoamericana 17. Madrid: ADE: Publicaciones de la Asociación de directores de escena de España.
- Persin, Margaret. 2009. “Concha Méndez Cuesta: Memoria, duelo y redención elegíaca.” In *Mujer, creación y exilio (España, 1939- 1975)*, edited by Mónica Jato, Sharon Keefe Ugalde, and Janet Pérez, 79–100. España: Icaria.
- Pfister, Manfred. 1988. *The Theory and Analysis of Drama*. Translated by John Halliday. European Studies in English Literature. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Preston, Paul. 1978. *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War: Reform, Reaction and Revolution in the Second Republic, 1931-36*. London: Macmillan.
- Resino, Carmen. 2007. “Reflexiones Sobre Mi Creación Teatral.” *Anales de La Literatura Española Contemporánea* 32 (2): 501–20.
- Rodrigo, Antonina. 1995. “María Lejárraga: Creación, Compromiso y Olvido.” *Mujer e Investigación*. Seminario de Estudios de la Mujer/Universidad de Oviedo/Consejería de Educación: 49–61.
- Roach, J. 1996. *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlanti Performance*. New York: Columbia University Press.

- . 1998. "History, Memory, Necrophilia." In *The Ends of Performance*, edited by P Phelan and L Lane, 23–30. New York: New York University Press.
- Rodrigo, Antonina. 2005. *María Lejárraga: una mujer en la sombra*. 3a vols. Madrid, España: Algaba ediciones.
- Ruiz, À. M. 2008. *La mujer en el teatro español de la II República*. Madrid: ADE: Publicaciones de la Asociación de directores de escena de España.
- Ruiz Ramón, Francisco. 1971. *Historia del teatro español*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial.
- Said, Edward. 2001. "Reflections on Exile."
http://www.dartmouth.edu/~germ43/pdfs/said_reflections.pdf.
- Sáinz de Robles, Federico Carlos. 1942–1943. *El Teatro Español: Historia y Antología (desde sus orígenes hasta El Siglo XIX)*. Madrid: Aguilar.
- Salvat, Ricard. 2005. "Aproximación al universo creativo de María Teresa León." In *María Teresa León: Memoria de La Hermosura*. Madrid: Fundación Autor.
- Sánchez Martin, Eva. 2006. "Radiografía del entusiasmo: La voz poética de Concha Méndez Cuesta." In *Escritores, Editoriales y Revistas del Exilio Republicano de 1939*, edited by Aznar Soler Manuel, 889–94. Grupo de estudios del exilio literario (GEXEL) de la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. Sevilla: Renacimiento.
- Sánchez, José Antonio. 1998. "'The Impossible Theatre': The Spanish Stage at the Time of the Avant-Garde." Translated by Jill Pythian. *Contemporary Theatre Review, Spanish Theatre 1920-1995. Strategies in Protest and Imagination*, edited Maria M Delgado, 2 (7): 19–70.
<https://play.google.com/books/reader?printsec=frontcover&output=reader&id=SD9VbJbvWboC&pg=GBS.PT18>.
- Sand, George. 1841. "Un Hiver à Majorque." *Project Gutenberg*.
<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/14688>.

- Santonja, Gonzalo. 2003. *Homenaje a María Teresa León en su centenario*. Madrid: Sociedad Estatal de Conmemoraciones Culturales.
- Sastre, Juan Aguilera, & Vizcarra, Isabel Lizarraga, eds. 2009. *De María de La O Lejárraga García a María Martínez Sierra*. Logroño: Instituto de Estudios Riojanos.
- Sastre, Juan Aguilera, & Vizcarra, Isabel Lizarraga, eds. 2009. "Introducción." In *Tragedia de la perra vida y otras diversiones. Teatro del exilio (1939-1974)*, 8–53. Sevilla: Renacimiento.
- Sastre, Juan Aguilera. 2006. *Ante La República: Conferencias y Entrevistas (1931-2)*. Logroño: Instituto de Estudios Riojanos.
- Sastre, Juan Aguilera & Torrecilla, Rosa Herreros. 1995. *Homenaje Del Ateneo Riojao a María de La O Lejárraga*. Logroño: Ateneo Riojano.
- . 2008. "La Asociación Femenina de Educación Cívica (1931-1936)." In *María Martínez Sierra: Feminismo y Música*, edited by Juan Aguilera Sastre, 79–141. Logroño: Instituto de Estudios Riojanos.
- . 2001. "La obra literaria en el exilio de María Martínez Sierra. Un texto dramático inédito." In *El exilio literario de 1939*, 459–91. Logroño: Universidad de La Rioja.
- . 2002. *María Martínez Sierra y La República: ilusión y compromiso*. Logroño: Instituto de Estudios Riojanos.
- Serrano García, Virtudes. 2010. "La historia de mi corazón, de María Teresa León: La vida y el teatro." *Estreno: Cuadernos de Teatro Español Contemporáneo* 1: 82–92.
- . 1997. "Política, teatro y sociedad: temas de la última dramaturgia española." *Monteagudo: Revista de Literatura Española, Hispanoamericana y Teoría de La Literatura*, no. 2: 75–94.
- Shakespeare, William. 1998. *As You Like It*. Kindle edition. Public Domain Books.

- Soler, Manuel Aznar. 1993. "María Teresa León y el Teatro Español durante la Guerra Civil." *Anthropos. Revista de Documentación Científica de la Cultura Guerra Civil y producción cultural*. Teatro, poesía y narrativa (148): 25–34.
- Stainton, Leslie. 1998. *Lorca: A Dream of Life*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Storey, Robert F. 1978. *Pierrot. A Critical History of a Mask*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Thacker, Jonathan. 2007. *A Companion to Golden Age Theatre*. Woodbridge: Tamesis.
- . 2002. *Role-Play and the World as Stage in the Comedia*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.
- . 1996. *Los espacios de la memoria (La obra literaria de María Teresa León)*. Madrid: Ediciones de la Torre.
- Tsay, Su-Hui. 2004. "¿Sonríe China?" Publicaciones de la AEPE. Centro virtual cervantes. El español, puente de comunicación. Segovia, Actas XXXIX (AEPE).
http://cvc.cervantes.es/ensenanza/biblioteca_ele/aepe/pdf/congreso_39/congreso_39_16.pdf.
- Valbuena Prat, Angel. 1956. *Historia Del Teatro Español*. Barcelona: Noguer.
- Valender, James. 2001a. "Concha Méndez (1898- 1986)." In *Manuel Altolaguirre y Concha Méndez, poetas e impresores*, edited by James Valender, 41–59. Madrid: Publicaciones de la Residencia de Estudiantes.
- . 2001b. "Concha Méndez y la escritura poética femenina." In *Actas del seminario internacional celebrado en la Residencia de Estudiantes en mayo de 1998 con motivo del centenario del nacimiento de Concha Méndez*, edited by James Valender, 207–33. Madrid: Amigos de la Residencia de Estudiantes.
- . 1999. "El solitario de Concha Méndez." In *El exilio teatral republicano de 1939*, edited by Manuel Aznar Soler, 409–20. Barcelona: GEXEL.
- . 2001c. *Una mujer moderna. Concha Méndez en su mundo (1898-1986)*. Actas del seminario internacional celebrado en la Residencia de Estudiantes

en mayo de 1998 con motivo del centenario del nacimiento de Concha Méndez/ [por] Concha Méndez [et al]. Madrid: Amigos de la Residencia de Estudiantes.

Valle-Inclán, Ramón María del. 2016. "Divinas Palabras." *Out of the Wings*. April. <http://www.outofthewings.org/db/play/divinas-palabras>.

Vilches de Frutos, María Francisca, & Dru Dougherty. 1997. *La escena madrileña entre 1926 y 1931: un lustro de tradición*. Madrid: Fundamentos.

Vilches de Frutos, María Francisca. 2010. "El exilio a través de los mitos: La libertad en el tejado, de María Teresa León." In *Setenta años después. El exilio literario español de 1939*, edited by A. Insuela Fernández, 689–708. Oviedo: KRK. <http://hdl.handle.net/10261/67091>.

———. 2012. "El exilio a través de los mitos: Sueño y verdad de Francisco de Goya, de María Teresa León." *Anales de la literatura española contemporánea* 37.2: 455–477/ 753–775. http://digital.csic.es/bitstream/10261/66042/1/VILCHES-DE%20FRUTOS_ALEC_2012.pdf.

———. 2014. "Entre ondas, lienzos y bambalinas: los retratos de mujer de María Teresa León." In *Género y exilio teatral republicano: entre la tradición y la vanguardia*, edited by Francisca Vilches-de Frutos, Pilar Nieva-de la Paz, José-Ramón López García, & Manuel Aznar Soler, 31–40. Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi Editions.

———. 2014. *Género y exilio teatral republicano: entre la tradición y la vanguardia*, edited by Francisca Vilches-de Frutos, Pilar Nieva-de la Paz, José-Ramón López García, & Manuel Aznar Soler. Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi Editions.

Vizcarra, Isabel Lizarraga. 2013. "El Color de La Nostalgia (María Lejárraga y Buenos Aires)." In *El exilio literario de 1939, 70 años después*, edited by María Teresa González de Garay Fernández & José Díaz-Cuesta Galián, 255–64. <http://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=4536815>.

Wheeler, Duncan. 2012. *Golden Age Drama in Contemporary Spain: The Comedia on Page, Stage and Screen*. Cardiff: University Of Wales Press.

- . 2011. “¿La Película Duende?: María Teresa León, Rafael Alberti and Alternative Traditions of Resurrecting Golden Age Drama.” In *Stages of Exile*, 71-93. Iberian and Latin American Studies: The Arts, Literature and Identity. Vol. 3. Oxford, Bern, Berlin, Bruxelles, Frankfurt am Main, New York, Wien: Peter Lang.
- White, John J. 2004. *Bertolt Brecht's Dramatic Theory*. USA: Camden House.
- Wilcox, John C. 1997. *Women Poets of Spain, 1860-1990: Towards a Gynocentric Vision*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Winslow, Colin. 2011. *The Oberon Glossary of Theatrical Terms*. Second edition. London: Oberon Books.
- Zambrano, María. 1998. “Prólogo.” In *El solitario. Misterio en un Acto*, Edición facsimile by Maya Smerdou Altolaquirre, 11–15. Biblioteca del 27. Colección EL PÚBLICO 1. España: Atlántida Grupo Editor, S.A.
- Zambrano, María. 1998. “Prólogo.” In *El solitario. Misterio en un Acto*, Edición facsimile by Maya Smerdou Altolaquirre, 11–15. Biblioteca del 27. Colección El Público 1. España: Atlántida Grupo Editor, S.A.